PERCEPTION

An Essay on Classical Indian Theories of Knowledge

BIMAL KRISHNA MATILAL

This book is a defence of a form of realism, better known as Naïve or Direct Realism, which in classical India was upheld by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. The author here presents the Nyāya view and critically examines it against the opposing Buddhist version of phenomenalism and idealism. His reconstruction of Nyāya arguments meets not only traditional Buddhist objections but also those of modern sense-data representationalists.

The dispute between the Buddhist and Nyāya schools of thought over the nature of perception, the critique and criteria of knowledge, and the status of the external world lasted a little over twelve centuries. Although Professor Matilal's approach is largely historical, it is informed by the belief that the issues raised by this dispute have a significant contribution to make to modern philosophical concerns.

Professor Matilal is Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford. His other published works include *Logical and Ethical Issues of Religious Belief* (University of Calcutta, 1982) and *Logic, Language and Reality* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1985).

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Acknowledgements

I DEAL in this book with the views of classical Indian philosophers particularly those who flourished between AD 100 and 1400. Using modern terminology one may say that some of them were sceptics while others were phenomenalists, still others realists. Needless to say, I have been strongly influenced here by my own understanding of the modern analytical tradition of the Anglo-American philosophers. My attempt has been to search for some common ground on the basis of which a fruitful philosophical discussion using the writings of the ancient and the modern philosophers could be generated.

My thanks are due to a number of friends, colleagues, and students, who offered at different times various sorts of criticisms and suggestions. Special mention must be made of Professors Kalidas Bhattacharya, P. F. Strawson, M. Dummett, J. N. Mohanty, A. C. Danto, Dr M. Aris, Mrs Suu Aris, Mr Prabal Sen, and Mr Jonathan Katz. I wish to thank also Miss H. Ahmed for helping me in preparing the typescript at different stages.

The arguments of the ancients are sinuous but they contain important philosophical insight. Hence an attempt of this kind needs hardly any apology to an Indianist. However it is not easy to make a safe transposition of thought from the technical philosophical Sanskrit to modern intelligible English. Many readers today would find the persistent use of Sanskrit terms and expressions tedious and troublesome. I have kept them to a minimum and always suggested their English equivalents. I have used parentheses wherever possible to contain Sanskrit expressions. Non-Sanskritist readers are invited to skip them in their first reading. Some sections in Part I, especially Chapter 3, may appear to be loaded with Sanskrit scholarship. The non-Sanskrit readers may sometimes skip them and go directly to next chapters. Certain Sanskrit technical terms will eventually find their way into the modern writings about ancient philosophy when terms like *dharma*, *pakṣa*, and *sādhya* will be as much tolerated as certain Greek words, *endoxa*, *elenchos*, and *eudaimonia*. But I have not assumed here that such time has come!

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Chronological Table of Philosophers

I GIVE below a list of the classical Indian philosophers whose views, philosophical positions, and arguments are discussed in this book. Almost all of them belonged to one or the other 'philosophical schools', by which we mean different streams of philosophical tradition running parallel to one another for more than 1200 years and being enriched by mutual dialogues, discussions, debate, criticism, and counter criticism. The 'schools' are usually classified as Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Buddhist, Mīmāṁsā, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, and Jaina. Under Buddhism there are other 'sub-schools' such as Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika, and Vaibhāṣika. The Mīmāṃsā has two 'sub-schools': the Bhāṭṭa (followers of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa) and the Prābhākara (followers of Prabhākara).

Most philosophers, explicitly aligning themselves to one or the other 'school', wrote commentaries or sub-commentaries on earlier works. Some of them wrote independent treatises (*prakaraṇas*). And some e.g. Dharmakīrti and Udayana, did both. Some philosophers stand independently without belonging to any particular 'school', e.g. Bhartṛhari and Jayarāśi.

I have primarily discussed the dispute between two schools: Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Buddhist. 'Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika' stands for two parallel systems that originated early in the pre-Christian era in the form of *sūtras* ('aphorisms'). The two merged into one in the 'middle' period (eleventh century AD). This school defends a strong form of realistic ontology. It believes that our awarenesses have direct intercourse with mind-independent realities. In Buddhism, however, early phenomenalistic realism gave way to three or four principal strands: (1) Mādhyamika scepticism propounds the 'emptiness' doctrine; (2) Yogācāra idealism believes that the external reality is the 'creation' of consciousness (*vijñapti-mātratā*); (3) Sautrāntika realism believes that external phenomena are inferable from the 'represented' forms in our awareness; (4) Vaibhāṣika phenomenalistic realism believes that percepts are as much real as the perception itself and the external world is directly grasped in our conception-free perception. The two sub-schools of Mīmāṃsā do not differ very much except in some minor details. They both support a sort of direct realism similar to that of

the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika. The Advaita Vedānta prefers a sort of monistic metaphysic and cites scriptural authority as its main argument.

AD	
*c.*150	Akṣapāda Gotama (author of the *Nyāya-sūtras*) Nāgārjuna (Mādhyamika Buddhist)
*c.*300–400	Vātsyāyana (Naiyāyika, author of Comm. on the *Nyāya-sūtras*) Śabara (Mīmāṃsaka, Comm. on Jaimini-sūtras)
*c.*400–550	Vasubandhu (Buddhist, several works on Yogācāra, Vaibhāṣika, and Sautrāntika) Bhartṛhari (Vedāntin, but independent philosopher of language) Diṅnāga (Yogācāra Buddhist, acceptable authority to the Sautrāntikas as well) Praśastapāda (Vaiśeṣika, acceptable authority on Nyāya)
*c.*500–600	Uddyotakara (Naiyāyika, Comm. on Vātsyāyana and Akṣapāda). Candrakīrti (Mādhyamika Buddhist, Comm. on Nāgārjuna)
*c.*600–700	Kumārila (Mīmāṃsaka, propounder of the Bhāṭṭa sub-school) Prabhākara (Mīmāṃsaka, propounder of the Prābhākara sub-school) Dharmakīrti (Yogācāra Buddhist, Comm. on Diṅnāga, acceptable to the Sautrāntikas as well)
*c.*700–800	Jayarāśi (Independent philosopher, agnostic) Yaśomitra (Buddhist, Vaibhāṣika, Comm. on Vasubandhu) (Śubhagupta) (Buddhist, Vaibhāṣika?) Śāntarakṣita (Buddhist, Yogācāra-Mādhyamika) Kamalaśīla (disciple of Śāntarakṣita, Comm.) Śālikanātha (Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka) Śaṃkara (Advaita Vedānta)
*c.*850–1000	Jayanta (Naiyāyika) Vācaspati (Naiyāyika, Comm. on Uddyotakara, wrote on other schools as well) Bhāsarvajña (Naiyāyika) Śrīdhara (Vaiśeṣika, Comm. on Praśastapāda)

c.1000–1100 Udayana (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, combined the two streams)
Śrīharṣa (Advaita-Vedānta, dialectician)

c.1300–1700 Gaṅgeśa (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Navya-nyāya)
Vardhamāna (son of Gaṅgeśa, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Comm. on Udayana)
Śaṃkara Miśra (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika)
Gadādhara (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, Navya-nyāya)

SCHOOLS

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika

Kaṇāda
Akṣapāda Gotama
Vātsyāyana
Praśastapāda
Uddyotakara
Jayanta
Vācaspati
Bhāsarvajña
Śrīdhara
Udayana
Gaṅgeśa
Vardhamāna
Śaṁkara Miśra
Gadādhara

Buddhist

Nāgārjuna (Mādhyamika)
Vasubandhu (Vaibhāṣika→Sautrāntika→Yogācāra)
Diṅnāga (Yogācāra–Sautrāntika)
Candrakīrti (Mādhyamika)
Dharmakīrti (Yogācāra–Sautrāntika)
Yaśomitra (Vaibhāṣika)
Śubhagupta (Vaibhāṣika)
Śāntarakṣita
Kamalaśīla

Mīmāṃsā

Śabara
Kumārila (Bhāṭṭa)
Prabhākara (Prābhākara)
Śālikanātha (Prābhākara)

Advaita Vedānta

Bhartṛhari (Advaitin, but an independent philosopher)
Śaṁkara
Śrīharṣa

Independent

Jayarāśi (sceptic)



Introduction

I

NAIVE REALISM is not really naïve. To describe a philosophic doctrine as naïve is at best misleading and at worst false. We may however understand the expression 'Naïve Realism' as a proper name rather than a descriptive phrase. To avoid anomaly, some philosophers have suggested the expression 'Direct Realism'. Wilfrid Sellars has commented: 'To avoid confusion—and the paradox of calling anything as sophisticated as an ably defended philosophical position "naïve"—I will use the phrase "direct realism" instead.'[1] D. M. Armstrong, a staunch supporter of a radical form of naïve realism, also chooses to call it direct realism.[2] We may be better advised to omit the term 'naïve'. This will at least avoid the solecism even if there is nothing more to gain from this christening of a philosophical position.

In this book I shall introduce, discuss, and try to defend a form of realism which I shall call Nyāya realism simply because this stands closest to the position upheld by the adherents of the Nyāya school in the Indian philosophical tradition. Historically this position is pitted against what I shall call Buddhist phenomenalism and idealism. I shall mainly present Nyāya realism and Buddhist phenomenalism in their historical context. An attempt will also be made, if only impressionistically, to show (i) what place Buddhist phenomenalism occupies in the whole range of such philosophical views as 'sense data' theory, scientific phenomenalism, and representationalism, and (ii) whether arguments in favour of Nyāya realism could counterbalance such views. This would be a more ambitious project, and one that obviously cannot be accomplished in a single book. But one must begin somewhere.

One may understand the history of philosophy in a global sense. The dispute that lasted a little over twelve centuries between the Nyāya and the Buddhist over the nature of perception, the critique and criteria of knowledge, and the status of the external world, is undoubtedly an important chapter in the history of global philosophy.

[1] W. Sellars, p. 61. [2] D. M. Armstrong, pp. xi–xii.

It is my firm conviction that modern philosophical discussion stands to be enriched, and our insight deepened, by a proper analysis and critical study of this 'chapter' by philosophers today. The need for painstaking research in this field can hardly be over-emphasized.

The concern of this book is not purely historical. The writer on classical Indian philosophy today is generally pulled in two different directions—towards the historical reconstruction of some classical views and towards the critical examination of similar modern views. I believe these two 'forces' are not diametrically opposed; with their combined impetus we might make some progress if only diagonally. This 'diagonal' approach represents a tension which is acknowledged here by the author with apologies.

It is not easy to introduce a book on Indian philosophy to a modern readership. First, the expression 'Indian philosophy' often conjures up certain images which most modern 'tough-minded' philosophers would be least disposed to consider. I shall try to dispel such images. I have claimed that this book falls into the category of the history of philosophy. History of philosophy, however, is not to be subsumed under the history of ideas. As Bernard Williams (1978) has pointed out, the history of philosophy differs from the history of ideas in that the latter is history before it is philosophy, while the former is philosophy before history.[3] In other words, in the history of philosophy, philosophical concerns prevail over historical concerns. Borrowing an image from Jaakko Hintikka we may say that the field called the history of philosophy need not be a 'graveyard' of dead philosophical ideas,[4] for critical and creative research by modern philosophers can turn it into a blossoming, beautiful flower-garden.

As a twentieth-century author, I shall use here an undisguisedly contemporary style. It is admitted that the concerns of twentieth-century philosophers may not, and do not, always coincide with the explicit concerns of the ancients. One might argue from this that the attempt to articulate the philosophical ideas of the ancients in twentieth-century terms is somewhat futile. I have gradually become convinced that this argument is not only false but also beside the point here. For while the basic philosophical motivation of the ancients might have been very different from those of present-day philosophers, several important questions and puzzles discussed in the classical Indian tradition do seem to coincide to a considerable extent with

[3] B. Williams, p. 9.

[4] J. Hintikka (1974), p. 1.

those discussed today. This book will focus upon one such area of overlap. To be more specific I shall direct my attention towards such philosophic activity as is dominated by the problem of knowledge and its criteria, the problems of perception, and the status of the external world.

The doctrines and arguments of the philosophers belonging to the classical Indian school, such as Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Sautrāntika, and Yogācāra, constitute the main source from which the arguments presented here will be derived. It will be observed that a meaningful as well as fruitful dialogue can be organized between the classical Indian philosophers of the above schools on the one hand and the Cartesian epistemologists and some modern analytic philosophers on the other. This may come as something of a surprise to those for whom Indian philosophy still remains an enigma. In order to elaborate this point I may be forgiven for a small digression.

David Hume, in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, tells us, while examining different conceptions of the deity or God, that the Indian philosophers compared God with a spider which creates cobwebs out of itself. He then comments that this is highly unlikely. For how can a contemptible creature like a spider be a model for God's creation of this beautiful universe?[5] Hume seems to have been acquainted with some eighteenth-century account of the Upanishadic lines where Brahman is compared with a spider.[6]

Writing towards the end of the seventeenth century, John Locke, in his epoch-making book, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, twice recognized that there was a subject called Indian philosophy, although he did so in humorous (and somewhat pejorative) terms. He wrote:

Had the poor Indian philosopher (who imagined that the earth also wanted something to bear it up) but thought of this word substance he needed not to have been at the trouble to find an elephant to support it, and a tortoise to support his elephant; the word substance would have done it effectively.[7]

Again, Locke comments

If anyone should be asked, what is the subject wherein colour or weight inheres, he would have nothing to say but, The Solid Extended Parts: and if he were demanded, What is it that solidity and extension adhere in, he would not be in a much better case than the Indian before mentioned who, saying that the

[5] David Hume, *Dialogues*, Part VII.
[6] *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, 1.1.7.
[7] John Locke, Book II, ch. XIII, 19.

world was supported by a great elephant, was asked what the elephant rested on; to which his answer was, a great tortoise: but being again pressed to know what gave support to the broad-backed tortoise, replied, *something he knows not what.*[8]

It is recognized here that there were some 'poor' Indians who professed to be philosophers and told, as elucidation of their philosophy, stories about an elephant supporting the earth and a tortoise supporting the elephant. It would be impossible to find a text in classical Indian philosophy where the elephant–tortoise device is put forward as a philosophic explanation of the support of the earth.

Western philosophy has come a long way since the days of Locke and much more ink has been spilled in the printed pages of millions of philosophical books. But even today, the picture of 'Indian philosophy' which Locke outlined in the above passages has surprisingly remained almost unchanged in the minds of a large majority of professional philosophers in the West. Thus, as late as 1971, Anthony Flew, in his *An Introduction to Western Philosophy*, felt no compunction in making such a sweeping remark as the following:

'. . . philosophy, as the word is understood here, is concerned first, last and all the time with argument. It is, incidentally, because most of what is labelled *Eastern Philosophy* is not so concerned—rather than any reason of European parochialism—that this book draws no materials from any source east of Suez.'[9]

Though one can view Locke's comment with good humour, one is bound to be shocked to read such a gratuitous remark from Mr Flew at a time when philological and Indological researches have made considerable progress and some reasonably good books are available in Western languages.

I have sometimes faced, rightly I believe, the criticism that there is a little 'leaning over backwards' in my writings to show the analytic nature of Indian philosophy.[10] I accept the criticism and can only say that this gesture is needed to correct persisting misconceptions, and sometimes to remove ignorance. Too often the 'soft-headedness' and tender nature of Indian 'philosophy' or Oriental wisdom have been emphasized. Too often the term 'Indian philosophy' is identified with a subject that is presented as mystical and non-argumentative, that is at

[8] Ibid. Book II, ch. XXIII, 2. [9] A. Flew, p. 36.
[10] J. W. Yolton, 'Review of B. K. Matilal (1971)', p. 396.

best poetic and at worst dogmatic. A corrective to this view is long overdue.

The above reference to Locke's incidental comment is not intended to belittle the importance of Locke as an empirical philosopher. The only irony is this. Had Locke read any Indian philosophical texts (none was available in English at that time as far as we know) such as, say, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* (*c.*AD 400) or Praśastapāda's *Padārthadharmasaṃgraha* (*c.*AD 500) he would no doubt have been struck by the obvious similarities in certain problems of empirical philosophy which he and these early Sanskrit writers were facing. Indeed the notion of substance or *dravya* as a support where properties 'inhere' was at least as old as the Vaiśeṣika-sūtra (*c.*100 BC).

2

The classical Indian dispute that will be presented here is one between Nyāya realism and Buddhist phenomenalism. We may briefly characterize Nyāya realism with the following theses:

(1) What we are directly aware of in our perception is the physical reality that exists independently of our awareness of it.

(2) We see as well as touch physical objects, wholes, bodies, and their properties as well. But we see and touch *wholes* and *substrata* because they have parts and properties, but not necessarily *because* we see or touch these parts and properties. On the other hand, we do not, in the same sense, smell the flower, but only its fragrance, nor taste the sugar, but taste only its sweetness. Likewise, we do not hear the train, but only its whistle.

(3) The whole is a distinct reality, created by the putting together of the parts, and yet distinct from those parts taken together. A substratum is likewise distinct from the properties it instantiates or the property-instantiations it contains.

(4) Perceiving or seeing-that is knowing in the most direct sense, and there is no further basis or foundation or ground which is more indubitable or certain, and from which such perceptual knowledge is derived or inferred.

(5) This knowledge is not always verbalized, but it is verbalizable.

(6) An analysis of perceptual illusion is possible without the assumption of sense data or sense-impressions intervening between the perceiver and the physical world.

(7) Ordinary knowledge is neither self-revealing nor self-validating. For '*a* knows that *p*' does not entail '*a* knows that *a* knows that *p*'. A cognitive event may occur and pass away unnoticed or unperceived. We can neither recall it nor communicate it to others by using language unless we have first inwardly perceived it. This inward perceiving is called *anuvyavasāya* ('inward perception'). It is similar to our perception of pain or pleasure.

All these points will be discussed and set against Buddhist phenomenalism, which may be represented by the following theses:

(1) What we are directly aware of in our perceptions is the sensible quality, and it is doubtful whether such a quality exists apart from a particular instantiation of it (a quality-particular) and whether such an instantiation exists independently of our sensation of it.
(2) Physical objects, material bodies, and wholes are perceived only in a secondary or metaphorical sense, for we 'perceive' them only by virtue of perceiving the sensory properties that we do perceive, and that we construe as belonging to such wholes or substrata.
(3) So-called material bodies are merely constructions out of the sensory phenomena. The whole is not distinct from its parts taken together. They are only *nominally existent* entities (*saṃvṛti-sat*). Moreover, they are objects of either unconscious inference or desire-dominated construction. As far as the unconscious inference (a specimen of *vikalpa*) is concerned, it might have psychological certainty, but never the required logical certainty. For it would not be derived from the awareness of *logical* evidence. Such inferential awareness will not amount to knowledge.
(4) Sensing is knowing in the most immediate sense. The sensory core is the foundation of knowledge. It is indubitable and incorrigible.
(5) Such knowledge is not verbalizable, for it is supposed to be entirely free from conception. Verbalization operates with the help of concepts.
(6) The object grasped in perceptual illusion is not distinct from the cognition itself. What is sensorily given in sense-illusion is an integral part of the sensation itself.
(7) Knowledge is self-revealing. No cognitive event can pass away 'unnoticed.' It is self-cognizing just as pleasure or pain is self-cognized. If a sensation amounted to awareness it would also have self-awareness.

From what has been stated above, it would be more than clear to any Western or modern philosopher completely uninitiated in Indian thought that these philosophers were traversing familiar territory. The two schools no doubt have their peculiarities, and they hold completely opposite views in crucial matters, but it is important to notice that these philosophical or metaphysical beliefs come in clusters. It is, I think, philosophically significant to ask why a Naiyāyika (an exponent of the Nyāya school) believed that the 'whole' must be distinct from the parts in order to justify his belief in his brand of direct realism, and why the thesis that knowledge is not self-revealing was, for him, a stepping-stone towards proving the objectivity of the external world. Conversely, why did the Buddhist believe that if knowledge or awareness were self-revealing in his sense of the term, it would then demolish the ordinary, common-sense belief in the solid and non-fluctuating external world? Why, it may again be asked, would the dissolution of the 'whole' into parts and material bodies into material properties pave the way for these properties to be reduced to the cluster of sensibilia (which the Abhidharma theory finally spells out as its *dharma* theory) and thus deal a severe blow to the common-sense assumption of the mind-independent external world? All these issues lead to some very central questions of philosophy, in any acceptable sense of the term 'philosophy'. Different chapters of this book will be concerned with these questions.

The traditional arguments will be presented here with adequate textual analysis wherever possible. I shall spare no pains to unfold, within the limitations of this book, the assumptions made by the classical Indian philosophers in presenting their arguments. I shall also try to explore what can be said—provided these assumptions are provisionally held to be right—about the views and doctrines of some modern philosophers on the same or similar issues. The approach, I believe, will be in some sense *eclectic*, but this is probably unavoidable in a discipline such as this, for our attempt here is to break the barriers that undoubtedly exist between the modern philosophical audience and the classical Indian philosophers.

One cannot, however, be too critical of one's predecessors in the field. It is undeniable that some modern Indian philosophers have produced very good expositions and creative reformulations of some of the speculative metaphysical doctrines of classical Indian origin. These are well appreciated by those (mainly Indians) who are, at least partly, acquainted with the traditional style of philosophizing in India. This

fact has generated the prevalent idea that Indian philosophy is, if anything, highly speculative and metaphysical, and that therefore modern analytical philosophers will find practically nothing in it to interest them. The main problem is that such metaphysical writings, interesting as they are in their own way, are seldom appreciated by the modern philosophic audience at large. There exists unfortunately a certain opaqueness in these writings, which modern Western philosophers find hard to penetrate.

Part of the reason for this opaqueness is the fact that these metaphysical doctrines are presented out of context. The very sophisticated philosophical methodology which we find in the classical sources of these doctrines is passed over as inessential detail, and this is a blunder. To use Indian terminology, if the *pramāṇa* method is ignored, the *prameyas* would be hardly intelligible, for they would only reveal the skeleton without the flesh and blood. The metaphysical doctrines of classical India developed in the background of intense intellectual activity in philosophy. Hence they are imbedded in the philosophical style that was current at that time, and this was subtly orientated by epistemological concerns and orchestrated by the logical theories of classical India. In Indian terms, it is said: *pramāṇādhīnā prameya-sthitiḥ*. Roughly the claim is that 'the establishment of metaphysical realities is under the domination of the theory of knowledge and its criteria'. We can state in modern terms, at the risk of over-simplification, that discussion of logic and epistemology must procede that of metaphysics and ontology, for the latter would otherwise be impenetrable. This point has been overlooked by some modern writers. I shall therefore try to focus upon the former. This, I believe, will contribute to the orientation so much needed by the modern discussion of Indian philosophy if any use is to be made of its rich philosophical heritage today.

3

This is a book on perception. Philosophical problems of perception lead to the discussion of theories of knowledge and ontological problems. In connection with perception, philosophers usually draw a distinction between the *contents* of our sense experience and the interpretations which we put upon them. In the view of a school of philosophical sceptics, no objective validity can be attached to any one set of statements about perceived reality, since they are all deemed to

be purely conventional, purpose-orientated, anthropocentric, and theory-laden. In this view, then, no strict verbal account of sensible experience would be possible even in ordinary language, for in making such judgements we simply take a step beyond what the actual sensory experience presents. Several Buddhists in the Indian context upheld such a position. It is however conceded that although a strict linguistic account of the sensory experience is impossible, it nevertheless amounts to a cognitive experience, which is non-conceptual and therefore indubitable.

This position, therefore, interposes the 'sensibilia' between us and physical objects, and thereby denies that there are physical objects of which we ordinarily take ourselves to be aware. But the ontological status of these sensibilia becomes a matter of controversy. As against this, Nyāya wishes to defend a common-sense version of realism, for it indeed credits the physical things with visual, tactile, and other properties. In Nyāya, I believe, the common-sense belief that each of us seems to be perceptually aware of objects of a certain kind—the 'visuo-tactual continuants' (as A. J. Ayer very conveniently calls them)—finds one of its strongest supports. The truth of this claim will be clear as we go along. It is necessary to make some comments about the use of such terms as 'realism' and 'common sense'. Naïve realism, common-sense realism, sophisticated realism, scientific realism, and even representative theory, are, after all, realisms of some sort or other. They seem to agree only in regarding external objects as real or existent; they disagree, nevertheless, about how we know or perceive them.

We may add to the above list what P. F. Strawson[11] has called 'our pre-theoretic scheme, which is also realist in character'. This general realist view of the world is reflected, Strawson claims, in 'our ordinary perceptual judgements', and should not be accorded the status of a *theory*, for its acceptance is the very condition for the sensory experience to be understood as what it is, viz. as what supplies the *data* or *evidence* for such a theory. This seems to be in accord with one of the horns of the sceptic or Nāgārjunian dilemma (Chapter 1). The general point is that evidence should not be given the status of a theory if such evidence is to be used as the basis for proving a theory or thesis. Violation of this principle has been nicknamed by the Indian Nyāya tradition as *asiddhi* or *sādhyasama*.[12] A piece of evidence must first be a

[11] P. F. Strawson (1979), p. 45.

[12] B. K. Matilal (1974a).

fact or reality in a non-related sense, and then evidence for something. For if the given evidence forms part of a theory, we would need further evidence for such a theory; evidence must eventually be ultimate and non-theoretical.

We need a non-theoretic or pre-theoretic starting-point. It is suggested here that this general, realist view of the world, the so-called common-sense view, should be that starting-point and hence kept in its non-theoretical guise. But the question is: why call it realist, if it is to be stripped of its theoretical guise? If the ordinary man's commitment to a 'pre-theoretical conceptual scheme' is called 'realist in character' we automatically make thereby a theoretical commitment. My evidence for believing that there is fire in that field, i.e. the fact of my being aware that there is smoke there, may be either good evidence or bad, but its acceptance can be neither realist nor anti-realist. What is therefore not offered as a theory can be neither 'realist' nor 'anti-realist' in the senses with which we are concerned here.

If a non-philosopher's view of the world is realist in character, one may argue that this is because it cannot be otherwise. For we have already conceived an ordinary non-philosophical man, the owner of what we call 'common sense', as one who must unreflectively take the seeming world to be real. Realism is, after all, a philosophical position. Must an ordinary man have a philosophic view of his own unless he is sufficiently provoked by philosophers? His view, as far as he himself is concerned, is not a *view*, not a *dṛṣṭi* (as a Buddhist would say), but only viewing or knowing reality as it is. It is not what the fact or evidence warrants, but fact itself. It is what M. Dummett has said to be 'knowing it as God knows it'.[13] If it lacks the status of a theory, it is only because it has this privileged status, the god's-eye view. We may say that the ordinary man is corruptible by us philosophers, but we are interested in his primal awareness before he ate the fruit of the forbidden tree! If the ordinary man's view or the scientist's view coincides with the god's-eye view, as it is unreflectively assumed, then it can no longer be held to be a mere *view*, for everything is supposed to be revealed to His omniscience! The point is not affected (as Dummett seems to hint) even if one does not believe in God, for what is required is only that there be an absolute (non-relative) description of reality.

J. L. Mackie has talked about a sort of naïve realism,[14] which Strawson calls 'confused realism'. It is characterized by a non-

[13] M. Dummett (1979), p. 31.

[14] J. L. Mackie, pp. 7–71.

distinction between objects and 'perceptions' of them (that is, external reality and the experiential content). This is apparently posited as a stage which is both historically and logically necessary for us to pass through in order to arrive at a better or 'sophisticated' view. The trouble here seems to lie partly in the ambiguity of the word 'perceptions' in Hume's use of it. For if it stands for the contents of our perceptual experience, then even in what Strawson describes as our 'pre-theoretical scheme', we distinguish the latter from our perceivings, i.e. the experiences themselves as internal episodes. If, however, 'perceptions' meant simply our perceivings, then I do not think it would be possible even for the most naïve (or, the most vulgar, to use Hume's language) among us to confound seeing with colour, or hearing with sound.

Let me elaborate the point. Both our pre-theoretical scheme reflected in our mature perceptual experience and the so-called naïve realism may be characterized by a lack of distinction or even confusion. But this distinction is not between our perceivings of objects and the objects we perceive, but rather between the experiential content and the object causally related to it, the 'object' in perception and the object outside. Hume apparently gave an argument to show that initially we all confuse 'perceptions' with 'objects', holding them to be one, and then are led to realize their difference by reflecting upon the continued existence of the latter and the interruptedness of the former. Hume's use of the word 'perception' here is intriguing. For the word seems to stand for the content of the perceptual experience, 'the vulgar', as Hume says, 'confounds *perceptions* and objects, and attributes a distinct continued existence to the very *thing* they feel or see'.[15]

Naïve realism does assume (but the question is whether it is a 'confusion' or an insight) that the experiential content in perception is identical with the external object in at least all veridical cases of perception. In this respect, I think the so-called pre-theoretical scheme (of Strawson) would agree with naïve realism. In fact, if the pre-theoretical scheme is taken to be equivalent to a theory, and arguments are given in its favour, then no argument (i.e. counter-argument) from illusion can show that it is wrong. For it would only show that the theory, in order to gain plausibility, requires some suitable causal explanation of perceptual illusions.

[15] David Hume, *Treatise*, I, iv. 2.

The epithet 'common-sense' in 'common-sense realism' is used by modern writers in various, and not too clear, senses. Taking advantage of this looseness, one may use it to characterize Nyāya realism as well. In Mackie's version, it is closer to a sort of representative theory, where, for example, visual appearance is said to represent (resemble) *faithfully* the qualities believed to be actually in the object. In Ayer's and Strawson's version of common-sense realism, we take ourselves to be perceiving the physical objects as 'the visuo-tactual continuants' in space, and distinct from the experience of perceiving them. But although they are distinct, our perceivings are, according to this theory, causally dependent upon the physical objects we perceive. If this is a fairly good formulation of what 'common sense' allows, then Nyāya realism may be described as one of the possible versions of common-sense realism. It will be noticed that Nyāya agrees with both parts of this so-called common-sense assumption, and argues for much else besides. Strawson says, 'When *x* is a physical object and *y* is a perception of *x*, then *x* is *observed* and *y* is *enjoyed*. And in taking the enjoyment of *y* to be a perception of *x*, we are implicitly taking it to be caused by *x*.'[16] This could very well be a close description of the Nyāya doctrine of *viṣaya-vidhayā kāraṇatā*. As Russell once said, 'science seems to be at war with itself: when it most means to be objective, it finds itself plunged into subjectivity against its will. Naïve realism leads to physics, and physics, if true, shows that naïve realism is false. Therefore naïve realism, if true, is false; therefore it is false.'[17] Many modern philosophers believe that the 'common-sense' account of our perception and the perceived world comes into conflict with the account that science gives us. Both Ayer and Strawson think that this conflict is only an apparent one and can be resolved; in other words, common sense can be reconciled to science. Ayer's method of reconciling the two lies in the following suggestion: he recommends that we conceive of perceptible external objects as being literally composed of the ultimate particles of physical theory, these being imperceptible, not in principle, but only empirically, as a consequence of their being so minute.[18] This suggestion comes very close to the Sautrāntika-Vaibhāṣika position in Buddhism, where the ultimate particles obviously cannot be the particles of modern physical theory but are nevertheless held to be ultimate and the minutest constituents of visible objects. As we shall see later (Chapter 8), a dispute arose

[16] P. F. Strawson (1979), p. 52.
[17] B. Russell (1940), p. 13.
[18] A. J. Ayer (1973), p. 110.

there as to whether imperceptibility is a necessary or contingent character of the ultimates.

Dummett has argued that the whole issue between science and common sense is spurious, for the so-called common-sense view is a myth.[19] He has successfully exposed the amorphousness of such popular notions as 'common sense', 'normal condition', and 'the plain man's view'. For him, scientific understanding of the world grows out of what we call common sense, and 'is continuous with it'. In this view, however, realism in the standard sense has to be sacrificed. For presumably the 'static' vantage-point of an ordinary man is to be given up for an ever-moving line. Science seeks to replace the relative descriptions by absolute ones, and part of the allure of science lies precisely in the idea that it attempts to tell us what the world is *really* like. But there does not seem to be any *a priori* reason why the world should admit a description in absolute terms. In disputing the causal role of physical objects in perception, Dummett contradicts the Strawson–Ayer version of common-sense realism. Ayer believes that since scepticism, by linking initially our perception with causality, derives the conception of objects as 'unobservable occupants of an unobservable space', we should postulate a primitive notion of perception (apparently endorsable by naïve realism or the vulgar system in Hume's writings) without any linkage to the notion of causality. This is, I think rightly, criticized by Dummett:

> To conceive of perception, even at the outset, as the causal action of the object—more exactly, for any of the senses that operates at a distance, of something emitted by the object—on the percipient does not reduce the object to an unobservable occupant of an unobservable space.

The fear of Ayer, and other philosophers, seems to be unwarranted in this respect, unless some form of representative theory is unconsciously conceded. This may be one of the reasons why D. M. Armstrong has perhaps mistakenly attributed to Ayer some version of the representative theory. Strawson, too, discounts Ayer's fear in this respect, and argues in favour of a causal relation that might hold, not simply between objects of perception, but also between perception and its object. I have already noted that Strawson's point is acceptable to Nyāya.

The above has been an exercise in noting different senses of 'realism' and 'common sense', and most of the Nyāya and Buddhist

[19] M. Dummett (1979), pp. 17–21.

authors pondered over the issues raised by them. We can already see at what points classical Indian theories of perception impinge upon the problems still being discussed by modern philosophers. But the major dispute in classical India was not so much between direct realism and the representative theory, as between direct realism and phenomenalism-cum-idealism. (I do not wish to devote much space here to a sort of relativism that was interposed in this dispute by the Jainas.) The classic argument of Dharmakīrti in favour of Buddhist phenomenalistic idealism is summed up in an oft-quoted line from one of his lost works: *sahopalambha-niyanād abhedo nīla-taddhiyoḥ*, 'the blue and our awareness of blue are non-distinct, for they are [always] apprehended together.'[20] The general idea is that if two entities are always and necessarily revealed together in our consciousness, we will have hardly any criterion for distinguishing between them. The notion of blue as external to our awareness of it is thereby rendered extremely dubious. To counter this, Udayana has put his point synoptically in the following line: *na grāhya-bhedam avadhūya dhiyo 'sti vṛttiḥ*. 'There is no awareness that arises (in us) repudiating the distinctness of the apprehensible (object from the apprehension itself).'[21]

What we see here is rather intriguing. I do not think that Dharmakīrti is referring here to the alleged primitive notion of perception, wherein a sort of 'communion' (to use Dummett's convenient phrase) with the object's essential being takes place. Rather he is formulating an argument: If to be aware of x (the blue = the object, the apprehensible) one must necessarily be aware of y (the apprehension or perception of x), then we have very little ground to introduce a distinction between the two; for, when two things are indubitably different (e.g. a cow and a horse), it is not the case that they are *invariably* apprehended together. This position cannot be part of 'the vulgar system' in Hume's description, for simply the identity of the perceptibles with our perception is presupposed in the vulgar system; but here non-distinction of the two is suggested only as the conclusion of a philosophic argument. The common-sense assumption of the distinction between the two is not disputed here, but it is shown how we can overrule such dictates of common-sense.

Udayana, on the other hand, draws our attention to a point that is

[20] This line of Dharmakīrti has often been quoted by his critics as well as his followers. This is from his *Pramāṇa-viniścaya* which survives in Tibetan translation. See T. Vetter's edn.

[21] Udayana, *Ātmatattva-viveka*, p. 230.

more or less undeniable. Whenever a perception arises in us clearly and distinctly, it marks the object perceived (*grāhya* = apprehensible) as distinct from the perception itself. Using an analogy, we may say that at the very moment when a mother conceives, the distinctness of her offspring is guaranteed. By appealing to such an intuitive understanding of the said distinction, Udayana may be bringing us closer to Strawson's notion of a pre-theoretic scheme or view of the world reflected in, and presupposed by, all our mature perceptual judgements. The world is presupposed here as containing 'variously propertied physical objects', located in a common space, and continuing in their existence independently of our interrupted perceptions of them. For Udayana, however, there is little reason to regard this so-called pre-theoretic scheme merely as a workable and uncritically adopted hypothesis. He maintains that sound philosophical arguments may be adduced in its support, while counter-arguments to it, based on the phenomena of illusion, variability of perception etc., can be explained away.

In view of the recent discussion and controversy centring around Dummett's reformulation in semantic terms of the issues between realism and anti-realism, it may be worth while to comment on his view here. Dummett sees his discussion as bearing directly on various kinds of realism, e.g. realism about physical/material things, about scientific entities, about mathematical objects, about the past. We are concerned here with only the first on this list. There again we are concerned with two specific claims: a claim about the existence of these objects, and another claim about the nature of that existence. In fact the two claims must go together. Otherwise the dispute between realism and phenomenalism will disappear. For realism, the familiar physical object not only exists but also exists *independently*. This crucial expression 'independently' means that if by chance all the sentient creatures were annihilated our familiar physical objects would still continue to exist in the same way. Phenomenalism disputes this claim: the familiar objects exist but not independently of any sentient creature's being aware of them. If all 'minds' were annihilated it would be not only pointless but also false to claim that a certain set (any set) of entities existed.

In modern terminology it is claimed that statements containing 'physical-object' words such as 'cats' would be determinately true or false according to realism even if we do not or cannot know such truth-values. This is a 'god's-eye view' of the world. The opposite doctrine

which has been christened 'anti-realism' by Dummett maintains that such statements would not have determinate truth-values, true or false. For reality or what exists is by nature indeterminate. Left to itself it is amorphous, shapeless, and unformed, and it becomes continuously shaped and formed and made determinate by our probings into it, our scientific theories, ultimately by our concept of meaning! As Dummett has put it, reality (material or physical) 'come into existence only as we become aware of it', although we do not *create* it.[22] They are like pictures: the content of each picture lies in the conception of meaning that prompts it.

Dummett's view has its difficulties as has been pointed out by many others. Moreover it is not absolutely clear whether such semantic considerations would be decisive of the ontological issues. But if the above characterization of Dummett's very complex view is even partially correct then the basic point cannot be easily dismissed. A realist seems to believe that the reality has a fully determinate (fixed) nature which our probings and manipulation cannot change. An anti-realist denies it. The anti-realist's intuition in this respect seems much closer to that of a Mādhyamika Buddhist. For the 'emptiness' doctrine envisions reality in a similar manner. The amorphous, shapeless, unformed, and indeterminate nature of reality seems to be emphasized here by the tetralemma or fourfold negation. The same is conveyed through such claims as 'everything is empty of its "own nature" (= *svabhāva* = fixed essence).' Briefly stated, the Mādhyamika claims as follows: whenever we conceive of an object or a fact we automatically impute to it a fixed nature (a *svabhāva*), but the object or the fact is by itself devoid of any fixed nature apart from what we impute to it in our conception of it. Insight or *Prajñā* tells us that there are no existents with such fixed nature; it is all relative to our conception of it.

Nyāya realism denies such relativism in any absolute sense. For it believes that the determinate nature of reality may elude us but it remains unaffected by our conceptions and manipulations.

4

Some friendly critics may ask why the ancients were interested in the sorts of questions discussed in this book. Philosophical problems are not studied simply because they are there like Mt Everest. In the

[22] M. Dummett (1978), pp. xxviii–xxix.

context of Indian philosophy this question is more pertinent. For after all, these philosophers were seriously concerned with the notion of enlightenment, the ultimate good (*niḥśreyasa*), freedom from the overwhelming problems of life, and the attainment of a tension-free, unruffled existence. How do these questions become relevant here at all?[23]

The question is of course an old one. Some Sanskrit commentators said of the *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*: 'How does the exact knowledge of the six types of realities (*padārtha*) lead to the ultimate good? For it sounds like showing a person the Himalayas when what he wanted was to see and take a dip in the Indian Ocean!' The traditional answer to this puzzle is not very illuminating. It is said that the exact knowledge of material realities will de-mystify them completely so that we can gradually rid ourselves of any false attachment to, and any frustrating desire for, them, and this will eventually be conducive to the ultimate good. We may also see the very general point that the Buddhists' predilection for phenomenalism could be most useful for the monks' praxis of meditation on the 'insubstantiality' of the external world.

These concerns are very general, but they obviously lead to issues which are very specific, complicated, involved, and intellectually demanding. For these are what we call today philosophical issues and puzzles. And when presented with puzzles and knots it is the nature of the human intellect to keep trying to unwind them. This then becomes part of the philosophical enterprise. After some time, slowly but surely the theological or salvational concerns are replaced almost unconsciously by philosophical ones. This is what has happened in the intellectual history of the medieval (classical) period of India.

The Buddha said that logical analysis does not lead to enlightenment. Śaṃkara said that grammatical analysis (*ḍukṛñ karaṇe*) does not *save* us from ultimate danger; hence why try them at all? Why, indeed? Concerning the so-called 'logical defences' of mysticism, Ben-Ami Scharfstein once wrote:

> '. . . the human mind is an incurable organ. Who with the wit to use it can keep it still for long? A day-dreaming pianist will hammer with his fingers on invisible keys, a poet will mutter with fragmentary eloquence, a bright man will reason quietly if he must, but impatient to express himself aloud.'[24]

The same may be true of the classical Indian philosophers in

[23] Thus Arthur C. Danto has raised such a question in a private correspondence.
[24] B. Scharfstein, p. 44.

general. Once they had tasted the 'forbidden pleasure' of philosophical argumentation, their fall from the paradise of non-reason was complete! (There was also a sort of 'redemption' for the mystics, as will be shown below in Chapter 2.4.) Philosophical concerns provide sustenance to the intellect while salvational concerns nourish the 'soul' and the two may not be always incompatible. For the nourishment of the intellect may very well be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for the 'liberating' consciousness! (See Chapter 1.3 and 3.1).

PART I

PHILOSOPHY AND METHOD

I

Philosophical Questions and *Pramāṇas*

'Tattvajñānān niḥśreyasādhigamaḥ'
AKṢAPĀDA GOTAMA
('Knowledge is what leads to attainment of the highest good.')

1.1 The Pramāṇa *Epistemology*

EVERY one of us, in his pre-philosophical mood, is bound to believe that there exists a physical, material world—a world which is there independently of our awareness of it. But the truth or falsity of this simple and commonplace belief, as philosophers over the ages and all over the world have made us well aware, is one of the hardest things on earth to prove. The familiar fact that I am writing now on a paper with pen and ink and that all these three things, pen, ink, and paper, constitute parts of what we call the material world, seems to be something that can never be doubted, and yet philosophers have been able to cast doubt upon such pre-philosophical, pre-reflective, pre-critical certainties. The problem is that not only do we believe, as we must, in the mind-dependent existence of the physical world, we also seem to share a common feeling that this belief can be vindicated and proven to be true through rational means and evidence available to us. We feel that this goal, though difficult, is not impossible to achieve. However, the sceptics have argued that this goal is ever-elusive, for the best that philosophers of all ages could do is to formulate different, often conflicting, theories about the way the world is or seems to be. Granted that the theories are poor substitutes for truth, they are our only resort in our puzzlement. If the clothes do not fit we may either decide to remain naked or buy new ones that may fit better. The sceptics may prefer the pristine purity of nakedness (cf. 'emptiness', 'the elimination of metaphysics'), but others choose the latter.

Our beliefs acquire the status of knowledge when they are proven to be true. Philosophy, therefore, as part of its activity, aims at establishing criteria for, and characteristics of, knowledge, criteria which may possibly set limits to what we can know, and characteristics that may mark off knowledge from mere beliefs which are not proven

to be true. In the Western tradition, epistemology is the name given to that branch of philosophy which concerns itself with the theory of knowledge, that is to say, the attempted vindication of the reliability of our claims to knowledge. It investigates and evaluates evidence, our method of reasoning, criteria upon which our knowledge-claims are based. The function of what is called the *pramāṇa-śāstra* in Indian philosophic tradition coincides to a great extent with this activity. (This thesis will be well documented in this book.) It is not surprising that both in India and in the West pursuit of knowledge has been intimately connected with the pursuit of truth or reality (or, sometimes called the divinity). What is surprising is that the philosophical worries concerning knowledge have led to some very interesting results in both traditions. A study of *pramāṇa-śāstra* substantiates this point. What is a *pramāṇa*? Roughly the answer is: A *pramāṇa* is the *means* leading to a knowledge-episode (*pramā*) as its end.

Evaluation of our evidence for knowledge is tied to the question of the sources of knowledge, how knowledge is derived. An important and pervasive view, which is sometimes recognized as a characteristic of the philosophic position called empiricism, is that sense-experience or immediate experience is the primary source of knowledge. The strong form of this doctrine accords observational basis to all our theoretical and objective knowledge. In a weak form it may claim that all our knowledge must begin with sensory experience and that the ultimate court of appeal must be some observational data or other. The group of classical philosophers of India, whom I will classify as the *pramāṇa* theorists, seems to have upheld this weaker doctrine of the empiricists for they use this as an implicit premise from which the theory of *pramāṇa* is derived. The theory states that for each piece of knowledge there is some accredited means. It is further held by all the *pramāṇa* theorists that sense-perception is the principal among all the evidential bases or means, for all the bases must in the long run be authenticated by some (sensory) perceptual base or other. As Uddyotakara has commented: 'We emphasize perception, for all *pramāṇas* are (in some way or other) preceded by (sensory) perception.'[1]

The strong claim of some philosophers of classical India was that conception without perception is 'empty'. The counter-claim was that perception without conception is 'blind'. But it seems to me that the

[1] Uddyotakara (Thakur's edn.), p. 185: '*sarva-pramāṇānāṃ pratyakṣa-pūrvakatvād iti*', under 1.1.3.

counter-claim may also be compatible with empiricism. For it says that non-conceptual or pre-conceptual perception is merely blind or unrevealing, not empty or non-existent. Even so, such perceptual experience is possible: witness the experience of babies and the mute. This does not offend the spirit of the *pramāṇa* doctrine as long as it could be claimed further that such 'blind' perceptual occurrences constitute the starting-point of concept-formation. While remaining ontologically neutral regarding the status of concepts, we may say that whatever concepts are there, they do not enter our mind without being first presented or suggested by the senses. This does not apparently go against the medieval scholastic formulation of the empirical doctrine: 'Nothing is in the mind (intellect) without its first being in the senses.' (Nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu.)[2]

The cornerstone of such a philosophic position is what is usually called 'experience'. If all our factual knowledge and knowledge of existence are to be based upon, or should be vindicated by reference to, experience, we must all be clear about what is meant by 'experience'. But it is by no means certain what most philosophers in the Western tradition meant by this term. The situation in Sanskrit does not seem to be any way better in this regard. The analogous term in Sanskrit is *pratīti* or *pratyaya* (sometimes the word *anubhava* is also used); but neither are the Sanskrit terms always translatable as 'experience' in English, nor is it easy to find any other word suitable for the purpose. Experience is usually appealed to, in the Western tradition, when our search for certainty (in Cartesian epistemology) is supposed to come to an end and hence a knowledge-claim can be established. *Pratīti* or *anubhava* becomes also the ultimate court of appeal for many Sanskrit philosophers whom we will refer to here. There is an obvious problem if this argument is seriously and critically scrutinized. If the most immediate, non-conceptual experience is barren without being impregnated by a background theory, then it becomes a very inadequate guide to decisions in controversial, but vitally important matters, as we shall see in the next section.

I shall develop different philosophical theories of perception of classical Indian origin in the context of what I have called the *pramāṇa* epistemology. Hence I shall first give a very brief outline of the *pramāṇa* doctrine as well as the kind of scepticism that gave rise to it.

Scepticism concerning the possibility of our knowledge about the

[2] This is the usual scholastic formulation of a much older empiricist principle. The scholastics presumably derived the doctrine from the writings of Aristotle.

objective, external world has driven the philosophers of East and West to think of 'experience' as purely how the world *appears* to the subject without implying what it actually is or may be. A basic distinction has to be postulated between an experience and its interpretation, between the crude data passively received and construction of them into a structure. This, however, raises many important philosophic issues which we will go into later. But let us note one issue at the outset, viz. the paradoxicality of the situation. Empiricists try to make experience the 'building blocks' of our knowledge, but if those building blocks are given in terms of appearances only, then the edifice of knowledge will show only the *appearance* and not the *reality*. The sceptics, who first compelled the empiricists to search for the indubitable ground for knowledge to guarantee certainty, may now feel elated because our 'experience' of the external, material world still remains unestablished. We can have a 'causal theory' of appearances or of experience, but it will still allow us only to speculate about how the material world actually is or to wonder whether there is a material world at all, for it becomes like the unperceived Lockean substance. We can at best talk about our knowledge of the *appearances*. The Western epistemologists and the *pramāṇa* theorists are alike unwittingly led to look to our 'subjective' experience for the support of our 'objective' knowledge. This is what A. J. Ayer has called 'the existence of an unbridgeable gap' which the sceptic seeks to demonstrate, 'between the conclusion we desire to reach and the premises from which we set out'.[3] The problem is that somehow the epistemologists of both traditions feel quite unsure about how to bridge the gap, and there hardly seems to be any agreed principle on the basis of which they could proceed.

A comment on my use of the word 'empiricism' in this connection may be in order. The word is much entrenched in the West today in the sense of being a counter-theory to what is called rationalism, and hence my use of it in the present context may be misleading. Empiricism is supposed to oppose the doctrine according to which the mind is *not* a *tabula rasa*, but there are innate ideas in mind. Locke's empiricism was thus directed against such a theory of innate ideas. Roughly speaking, those who believe in innate ideas claim that abstract ideas, concepts, or universals can exist prior to sensory experience and provide a kind of knowledge more precise than that obtained from sensory experience. Empiricism, which rejects this claim, is therefore

[3] A. J. Ayer (1973), p. 63.

generally seen as mainly a thesis about the origin of ideas, universals, or concepts. But when I characterize the *pramāṇa* doctrine as being committed to some form of empiricism, I do not wish to give the impression that all *pramāṇa* theorists agreed about this thesis concerning the origin of ideas or universals.

In fact the term 'empiricism' has been used by philosophers with extreme looseness and hence there may be several philosophic schools, practices, and attitudes which could be called empiricist.[4] I wish to call the *pramāṇa* theorists empiricists in order to focus upon the fact that these philosophers, the Naiyāyikas and the Buddhists (as well as their counterparts in the Mīmāṃsā, Sāṃkhya, and Jaina traditions), were in fact engaged in attempts to refute the overpowering scepticism of such Indian dialecticians as Nāgārjuna and Jayarāśi regarding the possibility of knowledge. All parties propounding the doctrine of *pramāṇas* maintain that no knowledge is possible independently of some perceptual basis or other. Even scriptural knowledge (i.e. knowledge derived from scriptures) is regarded by some *pramāṇa* theorists as ultimately based upon the direct (presumably mystical) experience of such persons as the Buddha or the Jina. For Nyāya, the Vedas were spoken by God, and hence their validity is on a par with the validity of statements made by reliable and trustworthy persons who have seen the *dharma* or the truth. Mīmāṃsā is an exception to this rule, and Vedānta or the 'later' (*Uttara-*) Mīmāṃsā part company with the other *pramāṇa* theorists in this regard.[5]

In much of contemporary analytical philosophy in the West a form of empiricism is presupposed. (The old dispute between empiricism and rationalism has recently been reviewed by Noam Chomsky and a few others. I do not wish to enter into this age-old controversy here.) I would take the following line to resolve the terminological problem. As long as the observational basis of our knowledge or most of it is conceded, I believe that an important part of the empiricists' intuition is accepted. This remains so even if it is agreed within the general context that some universals, though they are not innate ideas in the

[4] Thus, W. V. Quine has argued that what matters in empiricism is 'just the insistence upon couching all criteria in observation terms'. Observation terms are terms 'that are or can be taught by ostension, and whose application in each particular case can be checked intersubjectively'. Quine calls this 'externalized empiricism'. See W. V. Quine (1976), p. 58.

[5] For the Nyāya view about the validity of scriptures, see Vātsyāyana under *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.7 and 1.1.8. See also Uddyotakara (Thakur's edition), pp. 365–7. For Mīmāṃsā, the scriptures are revealed truths, self-validating, and eternally valid.

mind, are mind-independent realities of the world. Bhartṛhari held the view that our innate readiness to articulate concepts in speech is an 'innate' disposition, but this disposition is *acquired* (in some metaphysical sense), for it is derived from the residual (memory) traces of countless experiences in countless previous incarnations of the person (*pūrvāhita-saṃskāra*).[6] One may well be reminded here of Plato's celebrated Theory of Recollection, the theory that says that so-called learning is really the recollecting of knowledge acquired before birth.[7] The Buddhists on the other hand regard universals only as convenient myths, helpful like a 'vehicle' but dispensable after the journey. Nyāya argues that some natural universals are objectively real and even perceptible, provided the objects instantiating them are also perceived. (See Chapter 12.) We may use the term 'empiricism' with a small 'e' and say that in the Indian context there are at least four optional philosophic positions under the general principle embodying the observation-based character of all empirical knowledge: Nyāya realism, Buddhist phenomenalism/idealism, mystical scepticism (of Nāgārjuna and Śrīharṣa), and Bhartṛhari's holism. In this book I shall mainly concern myself with the first two, and only marginally with the last two.

1.2 *Sceptical Questions*

Philosophical problems are characteristically initiated by a sceptical challenge to some accepted doctrine. The various *pramāṇa* theories of classical Indian philosophy were thus answers to the sceptical challenge that knowledge is impossible. The accepted doctrine (articulated probably in the early Nyāya tradition) was that it is possible for us to know what is there and that our means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) clearly establishes what is there to be known (or the 'objects' of knowledge = *prameya*). Before the rise of the philosophical systems in India, during the heyday of debates between the *śramaṇas* and the *brāhmaṇas* (roughly the period between 600 and 100 BC), there were sceptics like Sañjaya and others, whose accounts are to be found in the canonical literature of Buddhism and Jainism as well as in the Hindu epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. Scepticism at that time was either iconoclastic or directed against the knowledge-claims regarding moral, religious, and eschatological matters. Sañjaya, for example, was

[6] Bhartṛhari, ch. I, verse 121. Even without the hypothesis of reincarnation, one can take the innate readiness to language-learning to be a special endowment of infants.

[7] Thus, Plato: '. . . learning [is] nothing but recollection', *Meno*, 81 d. Also *Phaedo*, 72 e–77 a.

sceptical about the possibility of any knowledge about such matters. Some specimens of questions, the answers to which were thought 'unexplained' or 'unexplainable' (cf. *avyākṛta*) in the Pāḷi canons are as follows:

> Does anything survive death?
> Is the world finite?
> Is there a soul different from body?
> Does he who acts also 'enjoy', i.e. get reward and punishment?
> What is right and what is wrong?[8]

Scepticism about metaphysical truth-claims and moral principles gradually leads to scepticism about the possibility of any knowledge. It is thus not at all surprising when we find in Nāgārjuna, a great exponent of Mādhyamika Buddhism (*c.*AD 150), a full-fledged and systematic sceptical challenge to a theory of knowledge that tries to articulate a notion of 'knowledge' and 'knowables' by referring to various accredited ways or means of knowing (*pramāṇa*). Nāgārjuna was followed in this regard by Jayarāśi in the eighth century AD and Śrīharṣa in the eleventh century. Apart from Jayarāśi, who was avowedly a sceptic, there were also the monistic metaphysicians who were always critical of the *pramāṇa* method. In fact I recognize two distinct streams in the philosophic tradition of India: one is illustrated by the *pramāṇa-prameya* doctrine and the other by a total scepticism about the adequacy or validity of such a philosophic method. Philosophers in the first stream had more faith in the doctrines and dogmas of what we have called empiricism. Philosophers in the second stream used dialectics and *a priori* arguments to repudiate the claims of the *pramāṇa* theorists. These sceptics were also mystics![9]

The usual distinction between empiricism and rationalism—a distinction that was prevalent among Western philosophers primarily of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—does not seem to be very relevant in a context where a very frank fundamental critique of knowledge is put forward. Both the empiricist and the rationalist try to combat scepticism on different grounds. Both believe that there should be an indubitable ground upon which knowledge is to be founded: primary experiential data for the empiricist, and certain primary *a priori* axioms for the rationalist. The sceptical dialecticians of India followed a 'radical' method to expose the hollowness of the very concept of

[8] See *Dīghanikāya*, I, 27.

[9] B. K. Matilal (1982), pp. 42–63.

knowledge and knowables so that alternative ways of arriving at certainty—reason or sense-experience—were simply not adequate. The sceptics of India argued that the very concept of knowledge and its foundation is either paradoxical or circular.

Further, to be fairly consistent, the sceptical dialecticians, such as Nāgārjuna, Sañjaya, Jayarāśi, and Śrīharṣa, seldom, if at all, offered construction of any metaphysical system (Sañjaya and Jayarāśi did not, Nāgārjuna and Śrīharṣa apparently did); it was accepted *a priori* and without rational explanation, for it was handed down by the scriptures. It is still arguable whether Nāgārjuna and Śrīharṣa believed in any metaphysics except that they regarded philosophy conducted through sceptical method as complementary to their soteriological goal—a ladder to climb up or a raft to cross over, and then to be discarded. They sought to demonstrate that the so-called exercise of pure reason was bound to be futile for it would lose itself in the quicksand of contradictions as soon as it is rigorously pursued and led beyond the limits of possible experience. A famous and oft-quoted couplet puts it as follows: '"The own-nature" of things cannot be ascertained by the analytical exercise of intellect (*buddhi*). Therefore they (the things) are shown to be ineffable and without "own-nature".'[10] From the point of view of these Indian sceptics, the seventeenth-century rationalists of Europe were mistaken in supposing that the nature of things could be discovered merely through the exercise of reason.

Philosophical empiricism is ingrained in some form of scepticism. Doubt and uncertainty regarding the possibility of knowledge lead one to ground knowledge on the most direct sort of evidence (experience). I have said that the *pramāṇa* theorists (by which I mean the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas, the Sāṃkhya and Mīmāṃsakas, and the later Buddhists and Jains) believed in a weaker form of empiricism, namely that senses initially provide us with knowledge. The sceptics, on the other hand, denied this thesis, and argued that there is an inherent conflict between the data of experience and reason, and such a conflict leads to scepticism rather than to any theory about the way the world is.

The point that Nāgārjuna tried to put across is briefly this. The standards that we use to measure others are themselves in need of being measured. If this is conceded, then we end up with an infinite regress that is damaging to the fundamental assumptions of the *pramāṇa* theorists. If, however, this is not conceded, then, argues

[10] Cf. *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, ch. II, verse 173; ch. X, verse 167.

Nāgārjuna, our choice of standard becomes unreasonably arbitrary—a situation that is also intolerable to reason. I shall elaborate on this in Chapter 2. If a follower of Descartes argued that whatever standard we may choose it must be indubitable in the sense of our having a feeling of absolute certainty with regard to it, then Nāgārjuna would say that such a criterion would invest the standard with a subjectivity that would be repulsive to philosophers who are looking for some objective characteristic of the standard.

The *pramāṇa* theorists create a common front against this onslaught of radical scepticism. It may be objected that I have presented a very disparate bunch of philosophers as a united group, calling them the *pramāṇa* theorists. It is true that they adhered to different rival positions in ontology and other areas, but this should not blind us to the fact that a great deal of agreement on fundamental principles and method of philosophy exists among them. I shall outline a few points which the *pramāṇa* theorists of different schools seem to share in common.

All *pramāṇa* theorists agree, first and foremost but with varying degrees of emphasis, that what exists, or is really there, can be known (and is known). The domain of the knowables seems to converge, or coincide, with only a few exceptions, with the domain of 'existents'. Some (e.g. Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) would even go further to say that what is knowable is also *eo epso* 'effable', i.e. expressible or nameable in language, for whatever satisfies the conditions for being known satisfies also the conditions for being expressed or named. Other *pramāṇa* theorists, however, part company with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and are reluctant to make knowability a sufficient condition for 'effability'. There are others, for example Bhartṛhari and possibly also the proponents of Kashmir Śaivism, who would lend an indirect support to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika position by propounding a theory of an intimate connection between language and 'structured' knowledge.

Bhartṛhari argued that ordinary human consciousness is an ever-vibrating agency, revealing the objects (knowables) through the medium of words. Without such words or language-mediated revelation of objects (or knowables), the revelatory character of human awareness would be destroyed. Awareness or perception without the intermingling of words/concepts would be, in other words, *barren*. A cognitive act is, in this view, only a word-mediated act of consciousness. The Nyāya claim, however, does not necessarily assume such a view about human awareness. For Nyāya allows that there could be word-less, and, what

amounts to the same thing, concept-less awareness of the knowables (see Chapter 10). But it would be possible to express in language what would be known, or what we would be aware of, in this way. Others, dissenting from the Nyāya, argue that there may be—in fact, there are—objects or knowables, which could only be known, i.e. revealed to human awareness, but which may not be effable in language.

This 'ineffability' thesis can take several forms. One view says that what is 'sensed' or directly grasped by our perceptual experience cannot be captured by our use of word or language, for language is a social affair, and we can transmit through it only what is intersubjectively accessible. Pure sensory (and even subjective) experiences, to which upholders of this view would assign the name 'perception' as well as 'knowledge', are unique to each subject. Therefore, what is revealed in such an experience must have an important component that is incommunicable. This view, with possible modifications, is ascribable to the Diṅnāga–Dharmakīrti school of Buddhism and it leans towards what is called phenomenalism in present-day terminology. It also subscribes to a sort of logical atomism. Indeed this Buddhist point of view seems to coincide with the Russellian intuition about logically proper names. Russell argued that in an ideal language there must be logically proper names although there are no examples of them in actual language, for 'to get a true proper name, we should have to get to a single particular'. Diṅnāga might have had the same idea when he declared that the pure particular or the pure sense-datum is, in principle, ineffable (*anirdeśya*).[11]

The other view is holistic. It regards reality as a unitary, undifferentiated, and indivisible whole. But language necessarily slices this whole into pieces, and thereby becomes responsible for the proliferation of concepts. Almost all our concepts, e.g. cause, effect, and motion, issue according to this view, into some contradiction or other. To the extent that language operates with concepts, it fails to represent reality. I shall not discuss holism in this book, but will occasionally discuss Bhartṛhari's views to the extent they are related to the *pramāṇa* theory of others.

[11] Our mention of a coincidence should not be confused with the so-called comparative study. The philosophical motivations of Russell and Diṅnāga were undoubtedly very different. But it is sometimes philosophically rewarding to understand this difference in motivations. For Russell's comment, see his (1927), p. 267. For Diṅnāga, see Hattori, p. 27.

1.3 The Empirical and the Non-empirical

To one who is generally conversant with the recent history of Western epistemology, it may seem surprising that the Indian *pramāṇa* theorists do not discuss the rather well-entrenched epistemological distinction between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*. Obviously this distinction has something to do with knowledge. Whatever might have been the origin of the terms among the scholastics, they are understood nowadays (since Kant) as roughly equivalent to what is derived from experience and what is not. It is surely a lacuna in the Indian *pramāṇa* theory that it has very little to say about the nature of *a priori* knowleldge. We can catch only occasional glimpses of some background notions, that of purportedly necessary truths and *a priori* arguments. In other words, we can arguably talk about the *pramāṇa* theorists' view of the necessary and omnitemporal truths and arguments based upon such truths. As I have discussed this issue elsewhere,[12] I shall turn to a slightly different issue in the present context.

To suit our purpose we can talk in terms of a distinction between empirical and non-empirical knowledge. For the *pramāṇa* theorists discussed in another context what may be called non-empirical knowledge. They did so when they debated among themselves about the nature of 'scriptural' knowledge and what they called the knowledge of *dharma*.

Some philosophers have claimed that our knowledge of *dharma* cannot be derived simply through empirical means such as perception and inference. The notion of *dharma* (a very pervasive and significant term enriched by its ambiguous use) encompasses religious as well as social and ethical duties. It also includes some moral principles. Philosophers argued that the scriptures purportedly talk about such matters. They also deal with a number of factual beliefs on the basis of which the religious and moral duties are prescribed. We may recall that the early sceptics (such as Sañjaya) argued that we cannot obtain knowledge about such matters and therefore correct answers to such questions as 'What happens to us when we die?' and 'Why and how can the deeds we do here be effective for us hereafter?' are unavailable. The factual beliefs that we derive from the scriptures cannot therefore obtain the status of empirical knowledge, for the well-known empirical means are not available. The scriptures, it is argued, impart non-empirical or trans-empirical knowledge. For as far as the *pramāṇa*

[12] B. K. Matilal (1982), pp. 128–51.

theory is concerned, it has to be knowledge, not just a belief or faith, in order to persuade intelligent and rational beings to act the way they do. The tradition defines the scriptures as follows: 'The means (in fact, "knowledge-how") that can be known by neither perception nor inference is what they come to know through Scriptures. And this constitutes the scripture-hood of the Scriptures.'[13]

Vaidika philosophers such as Bhartṛhari and Śaṁkara have debated that our empirical ways of knowing, perception, inference or language, can sometimes be fallible but the scriptural way of knowing is by definition infallible! This is a sort of fundamentalism. Our knowledge derived in this way is bound to be true because no empirical means could possibly falsify it. Referring to the fallibility of empirical knowledge Bhartṛhari says: 'The sky looks like a solid surface, and the fire-fly like (a spark of) fire, (but we know that it is all wrong for) there is no solid surface in the sky, and no fire in the fire-fly.'[14] The scriptures reveal truths that are by no means revealed in the ordinary way. Śaṁkara has said: 'The truth (knowledge-hood) of the Vedic statements is self-established independently of anything else. It is like the sun which reveals itself while revealing colours.'[15] In other words, the scriptures are self-validating. Most philosophers belonging to the Pūrva- and Uttara-Mīmāṃsā upheld not only the 'self-validation' theory of the scriptures but also the 'self-validation' theory of knowledge in general (whether empirical or non-empirical). Their general thesis is that when knowledge arises it validates itself. We shall examine this issue in Chapter 5.

A very simple argument is given to show that there is no possibility of error in scriptural statements. They cannot be wrong for they have no author, no speaker. They are eternally given and 'trans-human' in origin (*a-pauruṣeya*). When a statement is false, the reason for this falsity can invariably be traced back to the shortcomings of its author, its speaker. Hence no speaker, no falsification! Obviously this amounts to a dogma. However, certain other considerations are submitted to avoid the charge of dogmatism.

It has been claimed in the *Mahābhārata*, the *Manusaṃhitā* and many other places, that the essence or truth (*tattva*) of *dharma* lies hidden from human experience, and comprehension of *dharma* would

[13] The oft-quoted verse is:

Pratyakṣeṇānumityā vā yas tūpāyo na budhyate
enaṃ vidanti vedena tasmād vedasya vedatā.

[14] Bhartṛhari, ch. II, verse 140.

[15] Śaṃkara under *Brahmasūtra*, 2.1.1.

therefore be impossible. But there are, fortunately for humans, some other ways of obtaining this knowledge: (i) the scriptures, (ii) the verdict of the saints and seers, and (iii) your own good conscience or moral intuition.[16]

On the notion of intuition or *pratibhā*, Bhartṛhari has a lot to say. For him, intuition is different from perception and inference and is a means by which we understand the undifferentiated meaning of a sentence as a whole.[17] We understand it in a flash. It is a separate awareness (*anyaiva*), not one which is generated by piecing together the fragments of meaning of different words and other constituents of the sentence. The scope of this intuition in Bhartṛhari's conception is however much wider. It is regarded as a flash of understanding which arises spontaneously in all sentient beings. It is natural and comparable to the power of intoxication that naturally develops in some liquids when they become mature. This notion in Bhartṛhari's description is comprehensive enough to include matters ranging from the instincts of birds and animals, the spontaneous capacities of newly born babies, and the infant's capacity to learn a language, to the intelligence of higher order. Bhartṛhari claims that this intuitive knowledge is far more reliable than any other kind of knowledge because it comes from within. It can arise in all sentient beings, for its root cause is the Word-principle which is an integral part of sentience and hence present (potentially) in all such beings. It is because of this principle that newly born babies are able to make the first movement of their vocal chords to utter words and to breathe. This is also how they learn a language.

From Bhartṛhari's description, it is not absolutely clear whether we regard intuition as empirical or non-empirical. I am inclined to hold that it is the latter. The Naiyāyikas will find it difficult to accommodate such a piece of intuitive knowledge in their scheme of classification of ordinary empirical knowledge. The scriptures in Bhartṛhari are

[16] *Manusaṃhitā*, ch. II, verse 1: '. . . *hṛdayenābhyanujñāto yo dharmaḥ*'. See also verse 12, '. . . *svasya ca priyam ātmanaḥ*'. On the incomprehensibility of *dharma* through reasoning, see *Mahābhārata*, Bhīṣmaparva, 5.17, quoted by Śaṃkara as *Smṛti* under *Brahmasūtra*, 2.1.6.

[17] Bhartṛhari, ch. II, verse 143. See also verses 144–52. See S. Iyer, pp. 861–92. In fact it is not unwarranted to bring together the notion of 'good conscience' in the *Manusaṃhitā* and that of intuition (*pratibhā*) of Bhartṛhari. For Puṇyarāja, while commenting upon Bhartṛhari, ch. II, verse 147, referred to poet Kālidāsa's description of good conscience in *Abhijñānaśakuntala* Act I, verse 9. And Kālidāsa's remark is said to be an amplification of Manu's notion of good conscience.

nothing more than the record of the higher intuitive knowledge of the seers and saints. It is the transcendental insight of the seers into such matters or facts as lie beyond the scope and limit of (ordinary) human knowledge.

The Naiyāyikas on the other hand argued that the knowledge-claim of the scriptures must have some sort of empirical foundation. It is, they held, ridiculous to assume that they have no author, no speaker. Just as the veracity of any statement is derived from the trustworthiness of its speaker, so the veracity of the scriptural statements is dependent upon the infallibility of its author. Its author is a person with perfect knowledge, God. Hence the truth-claim of the scriptures is of a piece with the truth-claim of any other statement. The speaker must be an *āpta*, a trustworthy person. Vātsyāyana defines an *āpta* as 'a person who has directly experienced the *dharma* and is motivated by a desire to transmit what he has seen'.[18] The definition extends to God who is supposed to have direct knowledge of the *dharma* and the scriptures being authored by such a person can be informative about the *dharma*. In fact the model of a trustworthy person can be relieved of its sectarian colour as well as its theistic overtone. Even the Buddha or the Jina can be called *āpta* if it is allowed that the truth of *dharma* has been revealed to their intuitive insight. In this way however the distinction between the empirical and the non-empirical may be said to disappear. Scriptural knowledge and the knowledge of *dharma*, the factual beliefs upon which the religious and moral prescriptions are based, would receive an empirical foundation of a different order. They are validated by a different sort of experience, intuitive insight of a Buddha, a Jina, or a saint.

I shall return in the next section to the discussion of (ordinary) empirical knowledge, which was the cornerstone of the *pramāṇa* epistemology. However I wish to make one further point in passing. The Indian way of looking at the scriptural, religious, and moral beliefs does not require a sharp dichotomy of facts and values, and it is incompatible with what is known as non-cognitivism in today's moral philosophy. Even a moral proposition becomes morally binding, that is, a *dharma* becomes a 'true' (*satya*) *dharma*, for it receives the required cognitive value from the intuition and the 'unimpaired' insight of the *āpta*, such as the sages, the seers, god, the Buddha, or the Jina. This

[18] Vātsyāyana under *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.7. (Thakur's edn.), p. 365. In fact Vātsyāyana himself says that the definition of *āpta* would be equally applicable to a *ṛṣi*, an *ārya*, and a *mleccha*.

might tentatively answer the obvious, often-asked question today about classical Indian philosophy: Why do these Indian philosophers with their basically religious, soteriological, and practical concerns (e.g. concern for the final freedom or *nirvāṇa*) waste so much energy and effort on the investigation of some apparently theoretical and secular problems, such as the nature of perception, truth and falsity of awareness, logic and meanings of words and sentences? To wit: They do not waste time and energy for they find them particularly relevant to their concerns although such relevance may have to be established in a rather seemingly tortuous way. Understanding precedes praxis and there cannot be any understanding that is of any value if it is not philosophically based and argued for.

1.4 The Pramāṇa *Doctrine: General Characteristics*

Briefly speaking, the *pramāṇa-prameya* doctrine states: (i) there are accredited means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) such as perception and inference, on the basis of which we make assertions about what exists, and what is true, and (ii) there are knowables (*prameya*) i.e. cognizable entities, which constitute the world. Each 'knowable' entity can be revealed or grasped by our knowledge-episodes. The means of knowing provide the required, adequate evidence for the objects or entities that we know. All *pramāṇa* theorists agree about the episodic character of knowledge. Knowledge or a knowing episode is brought about much like a sensation of pain by a set of causal factors. It is a happening, an event that takes place, a cognitive episode; but not all cognitive episodes amount to knowledge or knowing episodes. Only such cognitive or mental episodes would amount to knowledge as would yield a truth. Knowledge is but a true cognition revealing the nature or reality as it is. (See Chapter 4.)

While talking about *pramāṇa*, one has to emphasize its dual character: evidential and causal. A *pramāṇa* provides evidence or justification for regarding a cognitive episode as a piece of knowledge. It is also regarded as the 'most effective' causal factor that gives rise to a particular cognitive episode. The theory of *pramāṇas* in this way becomes (secondarily) a theory of justification as well. In Sanskrit technical terminology, a *pramāṇa* is said to be an 'instrumental' cause (*karaṇa*), or the 'most effective' causal factor (*sādhakatama*) of the knowledge-episode.[19]

There is also a systematic ambiguity in the use of the term

[19] See B. K. Matilal (forthcoming), ch. 5.1.

'*pramāṇa*'. It means both a means for (or a way of) knowledge and an authoritative source for making a knowledge-claim. It also means a 'proof', a way of proving that something exists or something is the case. If there is a table before me, a table which I see, then any means of seeing it (presumably the faultless faculty of sight) is a *pramāṇa* for what I see to be there. The same means is also called a *pramāṇa* in the second sense; it is an 'authority', *pramāṇa*, for me to know what I see, it forms the basis or basic evidence for my assertion about what I see. It is also a *pramāṇa* in the sense of being a 'proof', being a way of proving what I see. What I see, whatever it may be, is a *prameya*, a 'knowable', an 'object' of knowledge, provided my seeing also amounts to a piece of knowledge, a *pramā*, a truth-hitting episode, a knowing episode. Ordinarily, it is the first sense that dominates the philosophic discussion of *pramāṇas*, although other senses are also acknowledged and discussed.

The verbal root *mā* from which both words *pramāṇa* and *prameya* are derived with the prefix *pra*, means also 'to measure' (apart from meaning 'to cognize'). The analogy based upon this ambiguity of *mā* works very well here. What is to be measured is the *prameya*, and that by which it is to be measured, the measuring stick as it were, is the *pramāṇa*. Nāgārjuna asks the following question:

If you think the means of knowledge, *pramāṇa*, establishes the variety of objects, the knowables (*prameya*), just as by means of a measure one establishes what is to be measured, then how are the various, in fact, the four, means of knowledge (accepted by the Nyāya School) such as perception (inference, comparison and testimony), to be established?[20]

The *pramāṇas* are supposed to lead to just those types of cognitive episode by which the nature of reality is correctly and unerringly understood. It is then legitimate to ask, as Nāgārjuna asks here, how we are to ascertain and identify those items that are called *pramāṇas*. If the set of certain objects is to be set aside as standards for measuring others, what standard are we to use to measure those standards themselves? Using the analogy, Nyāyasūtra 2.1.16 elucidates the sceptical argument: Using the standard of measurement (*tulā* = a weighing machine) we determine the correct measure of other things, but that standard itself is also a *prameya*, something to be measured.[21] This leads to circularity.

[20] Nāgārjuna, Vv., verse 31. [21] *Nyāyasūtra*, 2.1.16.

The *pramāṇa* theorists have to answer this charge of circularity and infinite regress. One easy way out would be to reach certain basic standards which would presumably be self-validating or self-measuring. Or to use the 'light' analogy (referred to by both Nāgārjuna and *Nyāyasūtra*), at least some *pramāṇas*, if not all, should be self-illuminating, just as light illuminates itself as well as others. We shall return to this issue in the next chapter.

We have noted the uneasiness and ambivalence that an empiricist as well as a *pramāṇa* theorist feels when he is confronted with the sceptic's challenge to spell out what sort of entities he really believes to be there, or what are the 'furniture' of the world that he experiences. First, he has a pre-philosophical, perhaps instinctive, belief in the existence of a material world around, and he believes that his belief can somehow be rationally justified. The sceptic drives him to search for the most certain and indubitable data as the foundation of his knowledge-claim. If he feels most certain about what is grasped in his most immediate experience, then the sceptic points out that he would be guilty of using his *subjective* data—the data of his subjective experience which would be by the same token inaccessible to all others—to construct and account for his objective knowledge. In fact, he has two broad alternatives open to him. Either he should assert that the things are exactly as they seem to us in our pre-analytic, pre-reflective mood—the world is constituted, among other things, of middle-sized, measurable material objects—or he should try to construct, and thereby give a philosophical account of, such objects out of the data of what he feels to be his immediate experience. This is the age-old controversy between phenomenalism and realism, or immaterialism and materialism (naïve realism).

1.5 Two World-views

A modern empiricist generally tries to shun ontological commitments. When he does talk about ontology, he oscillates between (common-sense) realism and phenomenalism, representationalism and anti-realism. A *pramāṇa* theorist is, broadly speaking, either a phenomenalist or a realist, and if he is a realist he is either a direct realist or a representationalist. This comment, however, is hardly illuminating unless we are able to underline the specific nature of the ontological position of each group of the *pramāṇa* theorists. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Let our starting-point be a physical object such as a table. The

metaphysician asks the question: How are we to get an idea of the table as it really is in itself? This is also part of an ontological inquiry: what type of object is the table *really*? The question already presupposes a duality, a distinction to be deployed between how things really are and how they appear to us. This distinction is implicit in most philosophical/ontological inquiries. This is the minimal achievement of the sceptic by his use of what is popularly dubbed 'the argument from illusion'. The *pramāṇa* theorists underline the distinction by calling one the *pratibhāsa*, 'things as they appear to us', and the other *ālambana*, 'the support or foundation of such appearances'. The exact connection that needs to be established between *ālambana* and *pratibhāsa* has been a vexed question among Indian philosophers, and different *pramāṇa* theorists came up with different answers.

The assumed distinction between how things really are and how they appear has at least two ramifications, and the sceptic's argument seems to overlook them. The sceptic, we may recall, uses cases of perceptual illusion or mistake as evidence for forcing the distinction between the actual and the appearance. But mistakes are usually mistakes of some human observer or other, not of all observers at all times. A rope has a snake-like appearance to a particular observer on a given occasion. Hence the distinction between how things appear to one observer and how they actually are is not the same thing as that between how things appear generally to any human observer and how they are. The sceptic apparently uses the first as his premise to derive the second as his conclusion. This conclusion is reinforced by the prevalence of certain common cases of universal illusion. The stick looks bent to any observer when it is dipped in water, and the sky looks like a blue dome to all of us on a clear day. (Bhartṛhari used such an example.) Modern science tells that what appears to be a solid table before me is actually neither solid nor a table. It is not a single object, but a swarm of particles.

Cases of universal illusion, if they occur at all, can be overstretched. In consequence, each perception would then be a misperception, and each description of the object would be a misdescription. To avoid such a consequence some philosophers would cling to the most immediate in perception, and hold that the physical world is as it appears to us in perception. They deny the duality and argue that in the final analysis the purported distinction vanishes. In Western terminology, this view approximates phenomenalism. It holds that the so-called physical world is actually a construction out of the atomic

data supplied by our perceptions. Hence the distinction between the real and the apparent is one of elements (atomic constituents) and the whole or wholes constituted out of their combination. Hence each perception is not necessarily a misperception and each description not a misdescription as long as we understand them within the given context. Just as the characterization of a thing under observation is dependent upon the observer's situation and the circumstances of his observation, similarly the description of the world or the world as it appears to us generally must be dependent upon the common condition of all human observers. It is relative to our own observational capacities. But this relativity does not necessarily transform it into a *false* appearance or a false description. If there is a demand for an *absolute* description, or a picture of the world that is independent of all such conditioning and limitations, it should be said that such a demand cannot ordinarily be fulfilled. One may concede to the Buddhist that the ultimate reality in this sense is ineffable or indescribable, but this is so only because there is no observer of the kind we are looking for, an observer who observes and is at the same time free from all observational conditionings and limitations. Reference to a god or a Buddha or a Jaina may save the argument, but that solution need not detain us here.

Science, it may be said, purports to give a description of the world in absolute terms—a correct description that is not encumbered by observational conditionings. The attractiveness of science lies precisely in the fact that it attempts a correct description of how things actually are. But this point can be easily dismissed. Let us see how. Let us say that the demand by the sceptic for an absolutely absolute view of the world, or absolutely absolute description of it, is in fact a red herring, for the sceptic has conceived the demand in such a way as to make it necessarily unfulfilable—an ideal that has been deliberately set up so as to make it by definition unattainable. The sceptic's argument is *a priori* and hence trivial, even if it is regarded as valid. But then there is no *absolute* science that offers an absolute view of the world. Short of an absolutely absolute view of the world (in that case, it will no longer be a *view*), the relative strength and weakness of different views of the world should be decided on other grounds; and within each view it would be sufficient if a distinction between the apparent and the real is underlined clearly.

Some *pramāṇa* theorists prefer a realist ontology, which is generally a 'substance-property' oriented view of the world. They agree with the

epistemological principle of so-called naïve realism that we see physical objects, things, *directly*, and not through a veil of sense-impressions. This principle in combination with the thesis that the world is exactly as we know it to be in our normal perception and inference, yields a world-view that is physicalistic in the sense that the elements are physical items such as things and properties, parts and wholes. This is the approach of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas and Mīmāṃsakas. The Buddhists may scoff at such a realist ontology of propertied objects, for, to the extent it has to make use of some non-empirical principles in order to argue in favour of such an ontology, it shuns empiricism. The realist, however, thinks that if there is a loss on this count, there is nevertheless a gain on another count: his world-view is brought closer to our pre-philosophical intuition about the world, it accommodates better our common-sense views. As long as we can make some sense of what is meant by 'normal conditions of perception', it holds that what the world really is coincides with what we perceive or infer under normal conditions.

The two types of world-view elucidated by the Buddhist on the one hand and by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika on the other are in agreement that the basic elements of either system are claimed to be 'observable' or 'perceptible' individuals. But obviously they are of different types. The Buddhist prefers the phenomenal object and argues that nothing beyond the phenomenal need be countenanced for we can explain everything in terms of the phenomenal. The *dharma* doctrine of the *Abhidharma* can be seen as an attempt to carry on this programme of explanation. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika chooses the observable physical elements, consisting of the things and properties, and hence their programme is to explain the phenomenal in terms of the physical. The choice of one rather than the other type of elements as basic reflects a difference in their philosophic motivation. The Buddhist does not accept the soul-substance, but explains it in terms of perceptions and other aggregates holding that nothing that cannot be explained in terms of the phenomenal is real, and hence words purporting to refer to non-phenomenal objects are vacuous. The Nyāya accepts the soul-substance as the substratum of various psychological qualities, and hence the 'physical-object' model of a table with its brown colour or rectangular shape suits his purpose very well.

Both the Nyāya and the Buddhist agree that an ontological system must be epistemologically grounded in the sense that what is epistemologically prior should be the starting-point of ontological

enquiry. But the difference lies in what they consider to be epistemologically prior, how they define the perceptual knowledge. The Buddhist argues that the phenomenal (the appearance of particular colour, shape, taste, smell, touch, and so on) by its nature comprises the entire content of our immediate perceptual experience, and hence it is epistemologically prior, while physical objects or propertied things are far removed from 'raw' experience. The Nyāya claims, on the other hand, that physical things or propertied things are more directly accessible to our perceptual awareness than the evanescent *dharmas* or phenomena, for the *dharmas* are, if anything, the atomic data of awareness and the results of our analytic intellectual activity. The relative strength or weakness of these arguments need not detain us here for later we shall have occasion to discuss them fully.

1.6 Ontological Issues

The pre-philosophical, instinctive belief in material objects is not the only concern in the theory of knowledge. Materials for knowledge are not supplied simply by what is directly grasped by sense, the particulars, whether phenomenal or physical. Particulars can be characterized as self-contained, unrepeatable or unrepeated entities. An instance of a physical object-particular would be the particular chair I am sitting upon, and that of phenomenal-particular is the particular unrepeatable *blue* grasped by my present sense-perception. It is difficult to expound this crucial notion of repeatability. We may say a colour is repeated if it occurs in two places, even at the same time. But in that case it would not be a colour-particular. What would it be? This opens up the possibility of another set of entities being considered as part of the furniture of our world, part of reality, and ontology must be concerned with this question. The repeatable entities are generally called universals.

Ontology asks 'What is there?' But this fundamental question is often broken down to a more familiar question: 'What kinds of things are there?' Ontology thus concerns itself with the basic principles of categorization. Philosophic tradition, both in East and West, generally identifies two broad sorts of categories: particulars and universals. If we say that the *same* colour occurs in two objects, then what we identify by the expression 'the same colour' is actually a universal. If, however, we refuse to adopt this mode of speech and say instead that the two objects (things) have a *similar* colour we talk presumably of two colour-particulars, and the expression 'similar' only indicates that there may

be a universal under which these two colour-particulars might be collected. One of the most persistent questions in philosophy has been: 'What sort of entities are these universals? Do they exist? Are they real?' Another use of the term 'realism' becomes pertinent here. Those who accept some universals to be real are called realist, those who do not accept any are called nominalist. If we have to apply this terminology to the *pramāṇa* theorists, we have to put the Buddhist (of the Diṅnāga–Dharmakīrti school) on the side of the nominalist, and the Nyāya etc. on the side of the realist. This need not cause surprise, for in general philosophers with a phenomenalistic stance in the West have favoured a nominalistic ontology, although there does not seem to be any obviously necessary connection between the two.

It may be noted here that as the Buddhist phenomenalism waxes idealistic, the external world beyond the phenomena and appearances becomes more and more elusive. A standard Buddhist view is thus nicknamed *sākāravāda*, the theory which holds that each awareness has its own (intrinsic) form, the 'object-form' that distinguishes it from other awarenesses. The 'blue-form' is said to be the distinctive feature of what we designate as the awareness of blue. It is the 'blue-form' that is most immediately given to us, and from this 'blue-form' the Sautrāntika Buddhist would like to infer the existence of blue-object, blue atoms, as distinct from, but causally related to, the 'blue-form' in awareness. But the *sākāravādin* who waxes idealistic says that it would be an impossible feat to draw such an inference from what is given. As Jayanta has put the point against the Sautrāntika: 'If when there is the object, the awareness has the object-form, and when there is no object present, the awareness lacks the form, then where would such a philosopher as maintains the constant inferability of the external object find the awareness that would support such an inference?'[22] In order to make such an inference possible, we have to be independently aware of the invariable connection between the said 'external' object and the object-form. Not only do we not have such independent knowledge, but we can also cite counter-examples where the 'object-form' is present (as in dreams and misperceptions) but the so-called object distinct from it is absent.

Since it is impossible to find awareness without the object-form, we may regard the object-form belonging to the awareness as its necessary feature. Some may say that we need to refer to external objects to

[22] Jayanta, p. 15.

account for the distinctness of each awareness, e.g. awareness of blue and awareness of yellow, for such distinct external objects would then be causally responsible for the said distinctness of each awareness. But the Sākāravādin argues that once we admit the 'object-forms' belonging to awareness and giving to each awareness its distinctive feature, there will be little need to imagine the existence of the object as such, which may possibly contribute this 'object-form' to the awareness. By such and other arguments, the Sākāravādin eliminates the so-called objective world in favour of the 'object-forms' of our awareness. The slogan 'there is no need to go beyond the phenomena' would thereby be transformed into 'there is no need to go beyond the object-forms in the awareness', and then to 'there is no need to go beyond the awareness whose essential nature is to have some object-form or other'. Phenomenalism in this manner paves the way for idealism and immaterialism in Buddhism.

These Buddhists were *pramāṇa* theorists as well. Now an interesting question arises as follows: a *pramāṇa* provides both an evidential base for a knowledge-claim and a causal base for the generation of such a knowledge-episode. Besides, a piece of knowledge, being knowledge of something, must refer beyond itself to something else (called 'object'). Hence there is first the relation of cause and effect (and also that of the 'proof' and the proven) between the *pramāṇa* 'means of knowledge' and *pramā* 'knowledge'. Second, there is also the relation of the knowledge and the known. This obviously presupposes a realist ontology. But in the context of the *sākāravāda* idealism, how can one make sense of the said distinction? It will not do to say simply that such distinctions are all false. For strong common-sense intuition favours such distinctions as are reflected in our common usage, and hence, they require some explanation.

The Diṅnāga–Dharmakīrti answer to this point may be stated here. In the common usage, 'I know *X* by the means of *Y*', *X* is the object known and *Y* is the 'instrument' (*pramāṇa*) for knowing *X*, and the result or effect (*phala*) is the knowledge of *X*. This analysis is modelled after such usage, 'I hold the pen by the hand', where the hand is the so-called instrument for holding the pen. The Buddhist would argue that in 'I see blue with my eyes' there is no need to have an act–object relationship between the knowledge and the known. The case of the relation between the so-called instrument and the knowledge to which it is deemed to be an instrument, may also be reinterpreted as a sort of essential dependence or invariable connection. The said distinctions

can then be explained as referring to the three different aspects of the same knowledge-episode. The same episode of knowledge, in Diṅnāga's analysis, has three different aspects; one is given by the object-form, the other by 'form' of the awareness itself, and the third by what is called self-awareness (*sva-saṁvedana*), i.e. the awareness revealing itself as an awareness of blue. This 'blue-form' or the object-form is to be regarded, according to Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti, as providing both the evidential base for the object that is known and the causal base for the effect, i.e. the awareness revealing itself as the awareness of blue (cf. *sva-saṁvedana*). The problem of explaining perceptual illusion becomes a controversial issue in this theory, and this we shall discuss in Chapter 5.

In the medieval western discussion of the problem of universals there are usually three competing theories about their status: realism, conceptualism, and nominalism. In the Indian context, the contrast is usually between nominalism and realism. Conceptualism does not emerge here as a clear-cut doctrine. It shades off into some form of either nominalism or realism. (See Chapter 12.) In the modern context the problem arises primarily in the philosophy of language as well as in the philosophy of mathematics. But it is never dissociated from epistemological issues. Even W. V. Quine pointed out a connection between the medieval controversy about the nature of universals and the modern discussion of necessary truths in the philosophy of mathematics:

> The three main medieval points of view regarding universals are designated by historians as realism, conceptualism and nominalism. Essentially the same three doctrines reappear in twentieth-century surveys of the philosophy of mathematics under the new names logicism, intuitionism and formalism.[23]

In our discussion of Indian philosophers we will see that conceptualism is actually a version of nominalism, as the distinction between concepts and corresponding words is made to vanish under the scrutiny of such linguistic philosophers as Bhartṛhari or Helārāja. Sometimes the distinction between conceptualism and realism is made to vanish as the concepts are accorded some sort of reality. A sharp and well-defined formulation of conceptualism is not easily available even in the Western tradition, except in medieval scholasticism. Intuitionism in mathematics is however a viable alternative. Medieval conceptualism is the offshoot of medieval theology, which argued that logical and

[23] W. V. Quine (1961), p. 14.

mathematical truths were known by God simply by knowing the powers of his own essence and not by virtue of anything outside his mind. Classical Indian philosophers, and even theologians among them, did not discuss the problem of God's knowledge of the *a priori* disciplines, and they did not develop conceptualism in the Western medieval sense. Intuitionism retains at least one segment of the conceptualist doctrine: truths of mathematics are truths about the human mind. However, the polarity of views regarding universals is still emphasized in terms of realism and nominalism or constructivism.

Just as we have an instinctive, pre-philosophical belief about a material world constituted by particulars, we also seem to have some tacit, pre-critical assumption about certain universals and abstract entities in the organization of our empirical knowledge. Critical scrutiny and argumentation may strengthen or weaken the assumption of the reality of such entities. Such is the general method in philosophy. Our instinctive beliefs are often not compatible with one another, and the business of a philosopher is to try to introduce coherence and hierarchy among them. For although coherence is not sufficient to establish truth, lack of it is enough to ensure falsity. Philosophy, as Russell has said, 'should take care to show that . . . our instinctive beliefs do not clash'. For, to continue with Russell: 'There can never be any reason for rejecting our instinctive belief except that it clashes with others: thus, if they are found to harmonize, the whole system becomes worthy of acceptance.'[24]

[24] B. Russell (1912), p. 25.

2

Scepticism

The unexamined life is not worth living

SOCRATES

2.1 *The Paradoxicality of Scepticism*

UNCOMPROMISING empiricism leads to scepticism. One can stop short of the sceptical route by making some sort of a compromise. But compromises need not always be degrading or scandalous. The question arises, on the other hand, whether scepticism itself is a coherent position. Would not the sceptic himself run into some dilemma of his own? It may be claimed that even the 'uncompromising' sceptic eventually makes a compromise of a sort. I shall pursue this question here, after presenting the arguments of the Indian sceptics, viz. those who reject altogether the *pramāṇa* doctrine along with its emphasis upon the empirical foundation of knowledge, while tentatively accepting the empiricist stance of their opponents.

A philosopher has to learn to live with the sceptic, for they are both in the same profession, so to speak. A sceptic is not an intruder in the 'Temple of Truth', he shares the same concern for truth with the philosopher, and is reluctant to accept anything less. A sceptic is first and foremost an 'inquirer', and in this regard, all philosophers participate in inquiries and play the role, at least provisionally, of a sceptic to varying degrees. Both persist in seeking and probing, but a sceptic is distinguished by his persistence or concern, which is (the philosopher rightly points out) out of proportion, and hence, 'impractical'. Thus Kumārila says about the hyper-sceptic: 'If somebody imagines (the existence of) even some unknown counter-argument, he, doubting his own self, would be destroyed in all practical behaviour.'[1] But this rebuke which the sceptic receives from his opponent—the rebuke of being impractical, holding an impossible position and leading to an impossible situation—seldom matters to the sceptic, for I think (as will be shown below) he can argue his way out. Thus the

[1] This is quoted by Ratnakīrti (p. 38) from Kumārila's lost work *Bṛhaṭṭīkā*. See also Udayana's comment under *Nyāyakusumāñjali* Ch. 3, verse 6.

frequent jokes and insults that are normally heaped upon the sceptic are wide of the mark. For instance, Udayana points out that if the sceptic does not *believe* what he does not *see*, then he should not believe that his wife is alive when he is out in the street and hence should mourn for her death. Against such attacks the sceptic can justifiably claim that his point has been seriously and severely misunderstood. Or if, as Russell has said, radical scepticism is untenable and impractical, for 'from blank doubt, no argument can begin', the Indian sceptic might reply: (i) that he does not see a great virtue in practicality when one is seriously embarking upon a theoretical dispute; and (ii) that he is again being misunderstood for he does not doubt simply for the sake of doubting, nor does he seek nothing beyond uncertainty ('blank doubt'); he simply refuses to prejudge the issue and to believe beforehand that there is 'the rock or clay' (the indubitable ground for certainty) to be reached once we have 'cast aside the loose earth'.[2]

The sceptic claims that his sceptical position is what is demanded by consistency for he sees that the *pro*-arguments and the *contra*-arguments for any thesis are equally balanced. If it is shown however that scepticism itself involves some inconsistency, or that it is an incoherent position to hold, then it would be a serious objection indeed and should be answered adequately. Nāgārjuna's scepticism about all existents (*bhāva*), or about all philosophical positions was actually accused of paradoxicality and therefore inconsistency. This critique presented by the *pramāṇa* theorists such as Nyāya can be given in the form of a dilemma: if all things lack existence or all theses lack certainty (in Nāgārjuna's language, lack *svabhāva* or 'essence' or 'own-being'), then this particular thesis (and it is also a 'thing') must not lack essence. For if it does, there is no reason for us to believe it and Nāgārjuna should refrain from asserting it. And if it does not, there is at least one counter-example to falsify Nāgārjuna's thesis. Objections of this sort were formulated in the *Nyāyasūtra* and in Vātsyāyana's commentary.

We can use the notion of utterance and meaning to formulate the same problem. If the sceptic's position is that all utterances are devoid of (i.e. empty (*śūnya*) of) meaning, then this itself cannot be an utterance. For if it is, it falsifies itself. We can think of 'meaning' here as something that is not necessarily separable from thinking or

[2] Thus Descartes' well-known expression: 'My design was only to provide myself with good ground for assurance, and to reject the quicksand and mud in order to find the rock or clay.' *Discourse on Method*, Pt. II.

intending. This is at least the non-technical sense of 'meaning'. For we cannot *mean* something by utterances unless we have thoughts that we intend our utterances to mean. Both Nāgārjuna and his opponents use such schematic terms as *bhāva* and *sva-bhāva* which are general enough to allow such interpretations. Their argument presupposes that a statement or an utterance is to be included in the domain of *bhāva*. For it is stated as follows: 'If all *bhāvas* are empty of their *svabhāva*, then your utterance (*vacana* or saying) that all *bhāvas* are empty must also be empty of its *sva-bhāva* for it is also a *bhāva*.'[3]

Whether the above formulation expresses a genuine paradox or not, it did have the consequence of showing that pure scepticism (or the Mādhyamika scepticism) cannot be consistently maintained. Nāgārjuna's reply is to be found in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*. He says: 'I have no proposition, no thesis to defend (which may lack any essence). If I had any thesis, I would have been guilty of the faults you ascribe to me. But I do not, hence I have no fault.'[4]

This reply of Nāgārjuna is amazingly simple. But can he get away with this? The purport is that 'no (philosophic) thesis has *svabhāva*, i.e. 'essence''—is itself not a thesis. It is not an assertion. It may be an utterance but only an *empty* utterance. To put it another way: 'No statement is certain, or has *svabhāva*, or is meaningful' should not be regarded as a statement, so that we cannot raise such questions whether or not it is itself certain, has *svabhāva*, or is meaningful. I think this reply should be satisfactory, for at least it is not inconsistent on the face of it. For it is quite possible that every thesis lacks essence or *svabhāva*, and this will remain so even if there is nobody (not even a Nāgārjuna) who asserts it as a thesis. If anyone asserted it, he would falsify it; but if nobody did, there is no falsification. We can imagine a possible world where all assertions made are empty but there is nobody to make the crucial assertion that all assertions are empty. A. N. Prior once followed J. Buridan in resolving the paradox with 'no statement is true' in more or less the same way: 'But if God were to annihilate all negative propositions, there would in fact be no negative propositions, even if this were not then being asserted by any proposition at all.'[5] The air of paradoxicality in the sceptical position, then, can be resolved only at the expense of disallowing the sceptic to assert his own position. For it is possible for a sceptic to believe that all beliefs have dubious value, including the said belief in question! One can raise many

[3] Nāgārjuna, Vv, verse 1, p. 277. [4] Ibid., verse 29 p. 285.

[5] A. N. Prior, p. 144. See also B. K. Matilal (1977), pp. 35–6; (1982), pp. 59–61.

questions here against Nāgārjuna. Is not his way of wriggling out of paradoxicality incomplete without a Buridan-like assumption that there is a higher power which decrees what is or is not in the world? I think Nāgārjuna would rephrase the point differently: 'It just so *happens* that everything is empty (lacks *svabhāva*), but it must remain *unsaid*, for to assert (say) it is to falsify it.

Dismissing the air of paradoxicality in the above manner, Nāgārjuna proceeded to formulate some serious criticisms of his rivals, the *pramāṇa* theorists, the Naiyāyikas in particular. What he called in question was the very concept of *pramāṇa*, our standards of proof, our evidence for knowledge. He did not use what is generally called argument from illusion, nor did he appeal to the fallibility of our cognitive process. He did not argue on the basis of the fact that we do misperceive on many occasions, or that we make false judgements more often than not. Instead he developed a very strong and devastating critique of the whole epistemological enterprise itself and therefore his arguments have a lasting philosophic value.

2.2 *Nāgārjuna's Critique of Knowledge and* Pramāṇas

If we claim that we have means of knowing (*pramāṇa*) the way the world is, or if we believe that we have such means available to us, it stands to reason to ask further: how do we *know* those means of knowing? For, obviously, we have to know or recognize that those are the means we have; otherwise, it would be like having in our pocket some money, the presence of which we are unaware and which therefore would be useless for all practical purposes. A means is not a means unless it does something and hence if we have the means, we have to make them effective. To make them effective, we have to *know* that they are there. Nāgārjuna therefore raises the legitimate question: how, or through what means, do we know that they are there? By raising such a question, Nāgārjuna is not simply urging a fault of circularity against his opponents. For there will be other serious logical difficulties in store for the Naiyāyika or the *pramāṇa* theorist.

In the above argument, the *pramāṇa* theorist seems to have conceded already that the means of knowing can also be, or can be turned into, the object of knowing. (A *pramāṇa* is also a *prameya*, i.e. is among the knowables. If this is so, then we need further *pramāṇas* to 'measure' them.) If our means is turned into an end, then to achieve that end we need further means. If our standards for determining others are themselves to be determined by another set of standards and

then a further set is needed for the second set of standards, we may regress into infinity and our search for the final standard may never come to an end. In the words of Nāgārjuna: 'If the proof of the *pramāṇas* were by means of other *pramāṇas*, then there would be an "infinite regress" (*anavasthā*). There would be no proof of the first, nor of the middle, nor of the last.'[6] In Sanskrit dialectics this fault is called *anavasthā*, literally 'lack of a firm grounding'. This situation as the sceptic envisions it would partly be comparable to the never-ending search for the rock-bottom certainty. In Cartesian epistemology for instance, a similar sort of scepticism is presupposed and the epistemologist tries to come forward with either the *cogito*, or the sense-impression, or the self-evident sense-data, as his final court of appeal.

There may be objections against my use of the term 'scepticism' in connection with Nāgārjuna. One could say that Nāgārjuna was a Buddhist and not a sceptic. It may also be said that if a sceptic is simply one whom Descartes characterized as a person who doubts only 'that he may doubt and seeks nothing beyond uncertainty itself', then he would try to cast doubt upon as many fundamental beliefs of the *pramāṇa* theorists as possible and certainly Nāgārjuna has not followed this method. In my defence I would point out that I do not have such a narrow definition of scepticism in my mind (as should be clear from the introductory comments). By calling Nāgārjuna a sceptic, or rather by using his arguments to delineate the position of my sceptical opponent of the *pramāṇa* theorists, I have only proposed a probable extension of the application of the term 'scepticism'. Here as well as elsewhere, I would urge my readers not to dispute too much over mere labels but to pay attention to the formulation of a position (in the Indian context) and the arguments adduced in favour of it. Sometimes descriptive labels are put on theories in order to familiarize them to readers and hence they need not always be too strictly interpreted.

It is worth noting that my extended use of the notion of scepticism can be discussed in the context of A. J. Ayer's characterization of 'philosophical scepticism': '. . . his [the sceptic's] charge against our standards of proof is *not that they work badly*; he does not suggest that there are others which work better. The ground on which he attacks them is that they are *logically defective*, or if not defective, at any rate logically questionable.'[7]

[6] Nāgārjuna, Vv., verse 32, p. 286.

[7] A. J. Ayer (1956), p. 40.

Such a general characterization would undoubtedly be applicable to Nāgārjuna, Jayarāśi, and Śrīharṣa, although I understand that even in Ayer's discussion the sceptic becomes more specific in raising some questions. He raises questions about such things as whether, or how, we are justified in making assertions about physical objects on the basis of our sense-experience, or in assuming and talking about other minds on the basis of their bodily behaviour, or in regarding our memories as giving us knowledge of the past. Nāgārjuna, however, raises more fundamental questions about the consistency of the *pramāṇa* doctrine as a whole: he asks whether or not our so-called standards of proof form a coherent system, whether our fundamental assumptions are endowed with at least psychological certainty. It is his contention that in the long run the concept of the standard of proof would be found to be self-refuting or self-stultifying.

However, the charge of infinite regress against the *pramāṇa* theory is not a formidable objection for there are obviously several alternative ways of answering it. Nāgārjuna anticipated and countered most of them. Some of his counter-arguments will be examined here so that one may appreciate the position of the sceptic in so far as he offers formidable objections to the *pramāṇa* theory.

The purported answers of the *pramāṇa* theorists may fall into two general categories. First it may be claimed that there are some, if not all, means of knowing which do not require any further means for knowing them, for they are what may be called self-evident or self-supporting (*svataḥ prasiddhiḥ*). Second, the authoritativeness of the means of knowing may be derivative in a way that need not lead to any infinite regress. The *locus classicus* of this argument is *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, verse 51. I shall, however, rearrange the alternatives as follows:

A. Neither knowledge nor means of knowing derive their authority (or validity) from anything else. They have (intrinsic and natural) authority and validity.

A proof is used to prove something else but it itself does not require a further proof. A piece of evidence is evidence for something else but is itself self-evident. This can obviously have two ramifications:

(i) Each piece of knowledge is self-validating, each means of knowing is self-supporting, each piece of evidence is self-evident.
(ii) A subset of knowledge-pieces or a subset of *pramāṇas* are self-

supporting and self-evident and upon these we base others of their kind.

In either case the analogy would be fire or light which reveals itself besides revealing others. (Nāgārjuna confounds the argument based upon fire-analogy as we will see later.) The first view is upheld by the Mīmāṃsakas (including the Vedāntins) as well as the Buddhist *pramāṇa* theorists. The second view may be attributed to the epistemologists in the Cartesian or the Humean tradition who want to reach rock-bottom certainty, casting aside the loose earth and sand. Nāgārjuna's criticism is applicable to both of them with equal force. For in either case we have introduced a clear-cut dichotomy. The *pramāṇas* belong to a privileged class, the set of the self-evident, self-supporting items, while the other items, viz. *prameyas*, are not so. Nāgārjuna questions this dichotomy as well as the validity of the principle lying behind it.

The question is why certain items, the so-called self-evident or the self-supporting 'means', should be sacrosanct, i.e. should enjoy the privilege of being independent of any requirement for further support. A dichotomy proposed by a philosopher should be based upon some dichotomizing principle and the philosopher concerned should be prepared to spell out the latter. In other words he should not only say what the difference is but also, and more importantly, account for the same. This is exactly what Nāgārjuna demands: '*Viśeṣa-hetuś ca vaktavyaḥ*' And the reason for such differentiation should be stated).[8]

What exactly is being asked here? The *pramāṇa* theorist has to account for the fact that why out of all items in the world certain items do not stand in need of being established or revealed to us by a 'means', while others necessarily do. What accounts for this difference in character? To say that it is the nature of one kind of things to reveal and that of the other to be revealed will not serve the purpose, for that will be hardly more helpful than saying, as we have already said, that one group comprises the 'means' of knowledge (*pramāṇas*) while the other group comprises the 'objects' of knowledge (*prameyas*). For in philosophy appeal to the nature of things is almost as good (or as bad) as an appeal to the caprices of Nature or Providence.

The second difficulty, Nāgārjuna points out, is that the *pramāṇa* theorist by introducing this dichotomy contradicts his original thesis—the very thesis that started the debate (*vihīyate vādaḥ*). The *pramāṇa*

[8] Nāgārjuna, Vv, verse 33, p. 286.

theorist started with the fundamental thesis that everything is established, or made known by, some *pramāṇa* or other. In fact the very well-known and much-debated Nyāya thesis is that to be an object of knowledge (*prameya*) is a feature shared by all things whatsoever. Now it is being suggested that there are certain things, self-supporting *pramāṇas* themselves or self-evident pieces of knowledge, which do not require a further *pramāṇa* or a further support. If to answer this difficulty it is urged that these self-supporting 'means' of knowing are not absolutely independent but simply require nothing beyond themselves to be proven valid or sound, then Nāgārjuna could go back to his first criticism: how to account for the alleged difference or discrimination between *pramāṇas* and *prameyas*?

The question Nāgārjuna raises is fundamental to scepticism in the Indian tradition. The early Nyāya method is essentially a programme that presupposes an initial doubt (*saṃśaya*), and through the employment of *pramāṇa*, moves on to reach a certitude (*nirṇaya*) at the end of the inquiry. (This is not exactly Descartes' project of pure inquiry which is carried on with the fictional *malin genie* who devotes all his efforts to deceive us.) According to Nyāya, if a state of dubiety is to be entertained with regard to the truth of any proposition (thesis) before certitude is reached through the application of *pramāṇas*, means of knowledge or evidence, then a similar state of doubt could *ipso facto* be entertained with regard to those very means of knowledge or evidence before certitude regarding their effectiveness or efficacy can be reached. This is presupposed by the Nyāya programme for arriving at certitude. (See also next chapter.) If the 'means' or evidence for knowledge is not subjected to this procedure, then Nyāya is simply arguing for a preferential or privileged treatment for a set of items, the *pramāṇas*, which is unwarranted. By admitting the universal possibility of doubt Nyāya is committed by the same token, according to Nāgārjuna, to the possibility of universal doubt.

The Naiyāyika cannot say that he has chosen the means of knowing as requiring no further evidence and hence immune from doubt because of our subjective feeling about their certitude or indubitability. For one thing, this subjective feeling may not be universal. The Nyāya programme is to establish objective evidence for all things whatsoever and hence the same requirement must be met for the means of knowing as well. It is true that the self-evidence or self-validity of knowledge, or its means, is not accepted by the Nyāya school. But in so far as the Nyāya method is partially accepted by philosophers who

argue for the 'self-evidence' thesis, Nāgārjuna's criticism would be relevant. In his sceptical refutation of the *pramāṇas*, a Nagarjunite obviously moves here from the universal possibility of doubt to the possibility of universal doubt, though this passage from one to the other may not be logically warranted. But more of this later (Chapter 5).

I have already indicated that Nāgārjuna's critique of knowledge would be relevant even if we transpose it to the Cartesian programme for the foundation of knowledge. Descartes himself paved the way for the super-critic by introducing the fiction of the *malin genie*. His own programme was to reach a set of irresistible and indubitable propositions on which to lay the foundation of other kinds of knowledge. This was quite in line with the general task of any philosopher, whether of East or West: to cast doubt on everything in order to reach certainty, to destroy apparent platitudes in order to gain genuine certitudes. Or as Ryle once suggested, the task is comparable to 'the destruction-tests by which engineers discover the strength of materials'.[9] We all know that the destructive side of the Cartesian programme proved more convincing and successful than its positive side. To be sure, Descartes' search for truth was also a search for knowledge as well as a search for certainty.[10] An obvious criticism was that he set his standards too high to make it attainable by his programme. But this criticism does not apply to the Nyāya method, for there the standard for certainty is not set too high. Without doubt it is made to depend upon standard means of knowing and evidence. Once the standard means of knowing are recognized, very little remains to frustrate the programme. If the initial doubt is removed through standard procedures, we have obtained a piece of knowledge. Hence Nāgārjuna's strategy was to find an internal inconsistency in the very presupposition of the programme. If everything is to be considered certified (certain) when and only when the means of knowing certifies them, why should the means of knowing not be certified in a similar way?

Where Descartes would reach his set of irresistible and indubitable propositions, the *cogito* or the idea of a benevolent creator for the successful completion of his programme, a Nagarjunite could very well say: 'Why are the indubitables indubitable, while the others are not?' It is well known that Descartes involved himself into a circularity for he

[9] G. Ryle (1945), p. 6.

[10] See B. Williams, pp. 36–8.

used the criterion of self-evidence in order to prove the existence of God and then used God to validate the criterion of self-evidence. A Nāgārjunite would have loved to expose this circularity for his sceptical claim is that either all propositions should be subjected to doubt to ensure their final and objective certitude, or none should be so subjected. If we select some, that would be unwarranted preferential treatment. The moment our programme sets objective certitude of propositions as its goal we forfeit the claim to demand objective indubitability of our self-evident, subjectively irresistible propositions such as envisioned in the *cogito* or the benevolent creator.

The epistemologist may give up the claim of self-evidence or the non-derivative nature of the authority pertaining to the means of knowledge or knowledge itself. He may choose the second alternative and say:

B. A piece of knowledge or a means of knowing derives its authority and validity from something other than itself (*parataḥ*). This can lead to the following possible positions:[11]

(i) A piece of knowledge derives its authority from another piece of knowledge. One instance of perception is proven by another instance of perception or by an inference. One instance of inference is proven by an instance of perception or by another inference. A piece of verbal knowledge is proven by an instance of perception or an inference and so on. Nāgārjuna notes all these cases in his *Vṛtti* (verse 51).

(ii) A piece of knowledge is validated by its 'object', which is part of the independently existent real. It assumes that there is a knowledge-independent world and that there are independently existing entities, the nature of which is known when we have knowledge. The 'real' object validates knowledge as well as its means.

(iii) Our 'means' of knowledge and our 'objects' of knowledge are mutually dependent. They validate each other. (Notice that this answer tries to bypass the question of the existence of a knowledge-independent world.)

A third alternative C is also formulated by Nāgārjuna, which says that the validation of the means of knowledge is *a-kasmāt* 'unaccount-

[11] Nāgārjuna, Vv, verses 45–7, pp. 288–9.

able', neither intrinsic nor derivative. This however could be included in alternative A (the non-derivativeness of the *pramāṇas*)

Alternative B(i) is summarily rejected on pain of the *regressus ad infinitum*. But this may not be as absurd as it is made to appear under the sceptic's scrutiny. This may be a very pragmatic solution of the age-old problem. To prove *A* we may need *B* and to prove *B* we may need *C*, but it is then possible that we do not need to prove *C* also. The reason for not requiring to prove *C* may not be the claim that *C* is self-evident, but that the question regarding *C*'s validity has not arisen. Such contingency may stop the regress, but that is not the crux of the argument. The main point is: must we necessarily validate *C* before we use it as a means to prove *B*?

There is the dubiety principle which we must accept: If *C* proves *B*, and *C* is doubtful, then *B* is also doubtful. There is also the invalidation principle. If *C* is the only way to prove *B*, and *C* is invalidated, then *B* is invalidated. But we may not require a validation principle along the same line: If *C* proves *B*, and *C* is validated, then and then only *B* is validated. For this would be too strong. We can simply say: If *C* proves *B*, then *B* is validated. The issue here is connected with two broader questions about the concept of knowledge. First, if I know that *p*, must I know that I know that *p*? Second, if I know that *p*, must I always feel certain or will there simply be an absence of doubt? As we shall see later, the Naiyāyika argued that from the fact that somebody knows that *p*, it does not necessarily follow that he knows that he knows that *p*. For example, on entering this room someone may know, on the basis of perception, that there are four chairs in this room without by the same token knowing that he knows that there are four chairs there. His knowledge-episode proves here that there are four chairs there, and hence the proposition that there are four chairs there is validated. But it would be too odd to claim that his knowledge-episode must also and always be validated by another knowledge-episode. (For he may not always know that he knows!) All these intricate problems will engage us later on (Chapter 5). For the present we can only say (and I follow Vātsyāyana on this point) that the regress to infinity can be stopped, and is actually stopped, despite Nāgārjuna's insinuation.

Alternative B(ii) can indeed be upheld. For a knowledge-independent world can indeed validate our knowledge and its means, provided they are *in accord* with that knowledge-independent world as it really is. But the sceptic is quick to point out that the existence of that very knowledge-independent world is what is in question here. An

epistemologist can say of a cognitive situation that it yields knowledge only when it is in accord with his experience. For we cannot know about a cognitive situation that it is in accord with the world as it really is without encompassing that knowledge-independent world within the act of cognition. We thereby run into circularity. We posit the world (the *prameya*) to validate knowledge and then validate the world by the criteria of that knowledge itself. It is like Descartes' attempt to prove God through self-evidence and then use God to validate the criterion of self-evidence.

Alternative B(iii) is rejected by Nāgārjuna because of the fault of mutual dependence, which is no doubt a kind of circularity. But why the position is asserted at all by explicitly courting the mutual dependence? Is there any sense in which it seems plausible? The answer is yes. I think the model of mutual dependence is not necessarily a faulty model. For when two sides are equally weak and uncertain, mutual dependence in the form of mutual reinforcement of certainty may be regarded as a virtue rather than a vice. If two propositions are mutually dependent upon each other, while both lack certitude, is there any comparative gain? It may be argued that both may be allowed to stand until either is proven wrong or right. There may be greater collective plausibility to both of them, although there is no strong argument in favour of either.

Besides, the mutuality of the means of knowing and the object of knowledge may point up another direction. If the object depends upon the means and the means upon the object, then both may be said to be knowledge-dependent. This position will then have a consequence that will be welcome to the Buddhist phenomenalists and other idealists. If we locate the object in what appears in experience, and identify knowledge with what makes it appear the way it does, we court some sort of mutuality between knowledge and its object, which may point up their essential non-difference. In any case, such a position cannot be treated lightly or rejected on frivolous grounds. (See Chapters 7 and 11.1.)

2.3 *Nyāya Defence of Knowledge and* Pramāṇas

Analogy is often a powerful argument in fundamental matters. The analogy of knowledge or its means with the light of a lamp adds just that much credence to the *pramāṇa* theory as to make the epistemologist's programme both plausible and possible. The position is an extended version of the 'self-evidence' thesis discussed above.

Knowledge or means of knowledge establishes both itself and its object, for it is like the light of a lamp which reveals both itself and others. Nāgārjuna criticizes it as follows:

It may be said—my 'means' of knowing establishes both itself and the other. As it has been said: Fire (i.e. light) reveals itself in the same way as it does others. The 'means' likewise establishes itself and the others . . . in reply we say: 'This analogy is improper. Fire does not reveal itself. For unlike the pot, fire is not seen to be unrevealed in darkness.' . . . If it were the case that just as the pot is first unrevealed by fire while it lies in darkness and afterwards being revealed by fire (light) it is perceived, similarly fire being unrevealed by fire first lies in darkness and afterwards it is revealed by fire itself, then it would happen that fire reveals itself. But this is not so.[12]

Nāgārjuna's source for this light analogy is not known to us, but an argument based on it is recorded in a similar vein in *Nyāyasūtra* 2.1.19. In reply to an objection raised in *Nyāyasūtra* 2.1.18 that if a 'means' is not revealed by another 'means' it remains for ever unrevealed or unestablished, it says: 'It (the *pramāṇa*) is established like the lamplight.'[13] If this cryptic comment means that a piece of knowledge as well as its means establishes both itself and its object just as the lamplight reveals both itself and other objects, then Nāgārjuna's criticism becomes relevant. (Vātsyāyana, however, proposes a different interpretation of the *sūtra* as we shall see below.)

Nāgārjuna rejects the light analogy by arguing mainly that it is improper to claim that 'light reveals itself' is a true proposition. For, he claims, it is more proper to say that light does not reveal itself. Hence the analogy does not work. But I think Nāgārjuna does not completely succeed in this rejection. For what does he mean when he claims that light does not reveal itself? Is it, according to him, meaningless to say that light reveals itself? Further, if light does not reveal itself, does it simply mean that it is revealed by something else? Or is it revealed at all? Probably Nāgārjuna would have claimed that it does not make any sense to say that light is revealed. For the expression 'light is revealed' may presuppose a prior existence of light before its revelation. We may concede the point that 'light reveals objects' is truly an awkward formulation. The expression may simply mean that there is revelation of objects. It may be that we are in fact asserting here the existence of some state of affairs or the happening of an event.

It is a stylistic device in language (as well as in thought connected

[12] Ibid., verses 34–9, pp. 286–7.

[13] Akṣapāda Gotama, *Nyāyasūtra*, 2.1.19.

with it) to separate agent, action, and object-patient, although we may be reporting a single happening or event. For example, when we report a battle we may say, 'They fought a battle'. 'Light reveals object' may simply be a stylistic way of saying 'There is revelation of objects'. Thus 'Light reveals itself' may be a stylistic variant for saying 'There is light'. But now we can push this point further to upset Nāgārjuna's own strategy. The expression 'There is light' may be only a variant way of saying 'There is revelation of objects'. For it is impossible to separate clearly the existence of light and revelation of objects. If this is so, Nāgārjuna has raised a vacuous question to confuse the issue. For you cannot have your cake and eat it. Nāgārjuna intends to reject the statement 'The means of knowledge reveals or establishes itself' as meaningless because the analogical statement 'Light reveals itself' is meaningless to Nāgārjuna as it stands. If instead of saying 'Light reveals itself' we are simply warranted to say 'There is light here and now', we can, instead of saying 'The means of knowing reveals itself', say *mutatis mutandis* 'There is or has been a means of knowing' or 'A means of knowledge has occurred or taken place'. Or, better still, we can say that there is revelation or establishment of objects whenever there happens to be a means of knowledge, just as we say that there is revelation of objects whenever there is light. If the matter is resolved in this way, then the proposed fault of infinite regress or circularity cannot arise. For we cannot raise such questions as 'What does reveal the object?' or 'What does reveal the means?' For, it may be argued, it is not necessary for some agent to reveal the object whenever such revelation takes place. The agent–action–patient distinction may be an arbitrary linguistic device and not an ontologically significant one. The same applies to the means. Talk of a means may be a stylistic device only, and need not be taken to be ontologically significant.

The light analogy in *Nyāyasūtra* 2.1.19 presents, however, an exegetical problem. For, if it is cited to support the self-revealing character of knowledge or its means, that would not be in accord with the prevailing standard view of the Nyāya school. The standard Nyāya view is that a cognitive event called knowledge or knowing is neither self-revealing nor self-validating, but is revealed (known) by another episode of knowing and validated also by something besides itself. The first theory is technically called *parataḥ prakāśa* and the second *parataḥ prāmāṇya*. As I have already noted, according to the view of *parataḥ prakāśa*, from the fact that someone knows that *p* it does not necessarily follow that he knows that he knows that *p*. A means of knowing, in

Nyāya view, cannot be likewise self-validated; it is to be validated, if necessary, by another means. Vātsyāyana, therefore, interpreted the light analogy of the *sūtra* in a way compatible with the standard Nyāya view.[14]

Vātsyāyana explains that the light (of the lamp) becomes a 'means' when it is an aid to an act of perception of a visible object, but the same lamplight becomes itself an 'object' of another perception caused by its contact with the sense of sight. In this way, the light plays the role of a 'means' when it helps us to see an 'object', and that of an 'object' when it is itself seen by the sense of sight. The 'means' and 'object' of knowledge are therefore not two distinct types of entities forming two ontological categories. The same entity (the same thing or the same substance) may play different roles—that of an 'instrument' or a 'means' as in 'I see the table by the light', and of an 'object' as in 'I see the light by the sense of sight'. Ontologically, the same light doubles as a 'means' and as an 'object', depending upon different linguistic descriptions. The grammatical case-inflection expresses the particular role that our particular thought-construction has assigned to the thing in a given context. This is what Vātsyāyana means when he claims that different *kārakas* are not denotative of different things, but of potentialities (*śakti*) for different role-playing in the construction, and therefore the same thing or substance may appear in different roles indicated by the use of different case-inflections as in the following sentence constructions:

(1) The tree stands there. (Nominative or agent)
(2) He cuts the tree. (Accusative or patient)
(3) He shows the moon by the tree. (Instrumental)
(4) He sprinkles water in the tree. (Dative)
(5) Leaves fall from the tree. (Ablative)
(6) Birds live in the tree. (Locative)

Once we have thus understood the difference in the roles played by the same ontological entity, i.e. a particular tree, it becomes easy for us to understand, so argues Vātsyāyana, that the difference between 'means' of knowledge and 'objects' of knowledge is the assigning of different roles to the entities in a given knowledge-situation. Certainly to be a 'means' signifies nothing but playing the role of an 'instrument' in the generation of knowledge, and to be an 'object' means to fill in the role

[14] See Vātsyāyana under *Nyāyasūtra*, 2.1.19.

of an accusative case in a knowledge-situation. Notice that Vātsyāyana's argument partly answers one of the Nāgārjunian criticisms: *viśeṣahetuś ca vaktavyaḥ*, 'the distinction (between 'means' and 'objects' of knowing) must be accounted for'. As this is not an ontological-type distinction, we need not go any further than what has already been said to account for it.

Nāgārjuna asks for the formulation of the criterion for some ontological or typological distinction, that between the *pramāṇas* and the *prameyas*, the 'means' and the 'object'. Vātsyāyana, I think rightly, resolves the issue by pointing out that the so-called distinction is only a distinction in role-playing, or, to be exact, a distinction in grammatical features. To ask why the same tree is the 'object' (accusative) in (2) above and a 'means' (instrument) in (3) above is to conflate an ontological issue with that of grammatical categories. Under one description the tree has become the 'object' and under another it becomes a 'means'. In this connection one may be reminded of the correct warning of G. E. M. Anscombe about the prevalent confusion regarding the nature of grammatical concepts: 'Grammatical understanding and grammatical concepts, even the most familiar ones like sentence, verb, noun, are not so straightforward and down-to-earth a matter of plain physical realities as I believe people sometimes suppose.'[15] Here Vātsyāyana explains the underlying grammatical structure to answer a puzzle posed by Nāgārjuna.

The charge of infinite regress is tackled by Vātsyāyana in an ingenious way. He argues that it is perfectly natural for a 'means' to be revealed or established by another 'means' just as the lamplight reveals the table while it is itself revealed by our sense of sight. This process need not regress to infinity. For it is not essential for every entity to be *known* or revealed to us first before it can play the role of a 'means'. We see with our eyes, the sense of sight, but we do not see the sense itself. We can infer that the sense of sight exists in us from the fact that we can see, but the fact of seeing does not depend upon our prior knowledge of the sense of sight. In order to use the money in my pocket, I would have to know that I have money there; but in order to use my ear-organ, my faculty of hearing, to hear a noise, I do not have to know first that this is my faculty of hearing. A prior knowledge of the 'means' is not always necessary before that means can be used for the generation of a piece of knowledge. This also does not imply that such a means is a self-evident one.

[15] G. E. M. Anscombe, vol. II, p. 8.

Nyāyasūtra 2.1.16 uses another analogy (besides the light analogy) to answer the Nāgārjunian sceptic. It is the analogy of the weighing-scale (cf. *tulā*).[16] Vātsyāyana says: 'The scale is the measuring instrument for the knowledge of the weight measure, the heavy substance such as a lump of gold is what is measured, the "object" of knowledge. When by such a lump of gold another scale is examined, then in ascertaining the second scale the lump of gold is the "instrument" (*pramāṇa*) and the scale the object measured (*prameya*).'

Uddyotakara explains the light example of the *sūtra* in a slightly different way. He does not think that the example is intended to show that some or all pieces of knowledge or their means are self-evident or self-validating. It only shows, according to him, that the rigid distinction between what is a 'means' of knowledge and what counts as an 'object' of knowledge collapses, without necessarily implying thereby that the same item which acts as a means, or a piece of evidence, for something else is also evidence for itself. The opponent, i.e. the sceptic, insists that there are, according to the *pramāṇa* theory, two separate domains—one is the domain of the means or evidence, the other, of the objects. A member of the first domain establishes, or is evidence for, some member of the second domain, and hence there would be a need for a third or a fourth domain (and so on *ad infinitum*) to contain items that would be evidence for members of the second (or the third) domain. Uddyotakara argues that the example of the lamp is used to point out that the rigid distinction between the first domain and the second domain collapses (for the same item can sometimes be a means and sometimes an object) and there is therefore no need to regress to infinity.[17]

Uddyotakara cites an interesting case to illustrate his position in regard to the problem of self-validation of the means of knowledge. He says that when someone wishes to test the water of a lake, for example, he takes a sample, viz. one bucket of water, and puts it to test. Having tested the sample, he proves the water of the lake to be pure (or impure as the case may be). Here the sample of water is the evidence for the purity of the lake water and what establishes the purity of the sample of water also establishes the purity of the lake water. People say that the sample of water is the means for knowing the purity of the lake water, although it is part of the same water in reality. Just as we do not say in

[16] See Vātsyāyana under *Nyāyasūtra*, 2.1.16.
[17] Uddyotakara (B), pp. 193 f.

this case that the evidence is also evidence for itself, we need not say similarly that a means of knowledge is also a means for itself.[18]

Uddyotakara's position is that something *a* can be taken to be evidence for something else, say *b*, and if and only if we search for *a*'s evidence might we obtain another item, *c*, as evidence for *a*; but in practice, for every bit of evidence, we do not always need to search for further evidence. For practical life (*vyavahāra*) goes on well as long as we are satisfied with the evidence that is available.

It is maintained that a thing can be a measuring instrument to measure a lump of gold, for example, but what gives the measure of that lump of gold, can itself be tested by another measuring device. What measures the lump of gold is what we call a 'measuring instrument' (a *pramāṇa*) in so far as the lump of gold and such other things are concerned; but other devices are also available when we need to measure our 'measuring instrument', and in that context we should call it a 'measurable object' rather than a means of measuring.

It may be argued that if our calling something a means of knowing or an instrument of measuring is in this way made dependent upon its direct connection with the act of knowing or measuring, then indeed we would not call something a 'means' when in fact it does not aid any measuring act or a knowing act. A measuring-stick will not be called a measuring-stick unless we measure something with it. Uddyotakara points out that our practice of calling something a means for knowledge, or for measurement, does not obey this ruling. For example, we do call somebody a cook (*pācaka*) even when he is walking along the street and is not cooking, e.g. 'There goes our cook'. Our practice or verbal usage is not simply arbitrary or unreasonable, for it is based upon the notion of *powers* or potentialities. The person we call 'cook' does not lose his 'power' or potency to cook just after one cooking. The power (*śakti*) existed in him even before the present act of cooking and will continue to be there, under normal circumstances, long after the present act of cooking. Hence when we see him walking along the street we say, 'There goes our cook'. This paradigm is applicable to our use of the term *pramāṇa* or *prameya*, 'means of knowing' and 'objects of knowing'. We can call something to be a 'means' even when it is not acting as an instrument in generating knowledge. Uddyotakara says, 'He who does not understand the use of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* with reference to the three time-stages (past,

[18] Uddyotakara (B), under 2.1.19, p. 199.

present, and future) contradicts even such ordinary uses as "Fetch the cook".'[19]

The ontic status of 'power' or potentiality is, however, a highly controversial topic. Uddyotakara does not go into it here. He simply states that our use of words may be justified on the basis of this assumed presence of power or potentiality (to cook, for example) even when such power is not manifest. In other words, he argues for two different states of the same power—a manifest state when the power is actualized in action and an unmanifest state when the presence of such power is only assumed but not visible in the form of action. It is pointed out that even an ordinary object like a table or pot could be said to have an 'unmanifest' state when it lies in darkness invisible to anyone and a 'manifest' state when it is visible in light. It is not clear from Uddyotakara whether he would accept causal power or potentiality as forming a distinct reality locatable in the thing itself. It is the Mīmāṃsaka who accepts 'power' or potentiality to be a distinct category (*padārtha*) on a par with things and qualities. The prevailing Nyāya view, despite Uddyotakara's point here, is that causal power does not form a separate category, and it was Udayana who elaborately refuted the Mīmāṃsaka view about causal power.[20]

The Nāgārjunian sceptic may argue that there are no means of knowledge such as perception and inference, for they do not establish objects in any of the three time stages, past, present, or future. In reply, Uddyotakara claims that the sceptic contradicts his own statement (*sva-vacana-vyāghāta*). For the negation in the implicit premise ('that which can never establish any object is not a means') cannot, by the same token, negate. Such a statement cannot be a means for establishing the said negation (non-existence) of the means, without itself being a means in the first place. Uddyotakara says that the case is like that of one who wishes to burn others by lighting his own finger. For either he would be able to burn others by burning, in the process, his own finger, or he would not be able to burn anything if he does not first burn his own finger.[21]

I have already pointed out that Nāgārjuna would allow such a situation. He would let his finger be burned with all readiness (destroy his own proposition, *nāsti kācana pratijñā me*) if that allows him to burn all others. This, however, may be an impossible feat, for if I first burn

[19] Ibid., p. 188 (under 2.1.11).
[20] Udayana, *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, ch. I, verse 10, pp. 107–25.
[21] Uddyotakara (B), under 2.1.12, p. 189.

my own finger, I cannot use it as a means for burning others, for that would be using a non-existent (already destroyed) means. However, Nāgārjuna can remain silent without formulating his own statement, for if all other propositions do not in any case exist, a statement is not needed to refute them!

2.4 *Is Radical Scepticism Feasible?*

The upshot is that a radical scepticism of this kind is not, or does not seem to be, a statable position. For if it is statable, it becomes incoherent or paradoxical. In other words such a position could be coherent only at the risk of being unstatable! It seems to me that both radical scepticism and Nāgārjunian Buddhism would welcome this situation, for here we may find the significance of the doctrine of silence in Mādhyamika. (The same point may also explain the ironical comment of Aristotle, though not the irony of it, regarding Cratylus who only wiggled his finger, instead of teaching anything.) Is it the only way to make radical scepticism a coherent position? If it is, then the teacher-philosopher is forced to remain mute and so lose any chance of success in communicating his doctrine. But there is another way. The sceptic may claim, as Śrīharṣa explicitly did, that he enters into a debate simply to refute others and it is not his responsibility to state his position, much less to defend it (see *vitaṇḍā* in Chapter 3.3). Assuming the standards of argument and proof of his opponent as only provisionally correct or acceptable, he would be inclined to show that the opponent's position is wrong, and there ends his philosophic discourse. In other words, his philosophic activity consists in *refutation* only, not in *assertion*.

The obvious difficulty here would be that the sceptic would have to answer the following challenge: How can he logically not *assert* anything while he refutes something? Is refutation of a proposition possible without any (implicit) assertion? According to the standard notion of logic, refutation cannot be successful without negating something, i.e. some proposition, and negation of some proposition p is equivalent to assertion of *not-p*. If we follow this line of argument then it is difficult to see how the sceptic can simply refute without asserting or stating anything. In other words, it is impossible to maintain the position of 'non-assertion' or 'non-statement', even though the sceptic enters into debate only for the sake of refutation. I think the radical sceptic has an easy answer to this problem. He may say that his refutation should not, and need not, be equated with the negation as it

is understood in standard logic (where to negate *p* means to assert *not-p*). His refutation is a strong refutation of a possibility (cf. Indian notion of *prasajya-pratiṣedha*) but without any implication for the contrary or contradictory possibilities. This notion of refutation is more or less prominent in our question-and-answer activity. It is a non-committal act of refutation or what I once called the commitmentless denial of the Mādhyamikas.[22]

What emerges here is that the problem of negation or the ambiguity of negative statement is philosophically very central. Negation, as Richard Routley has commented (in private correspondence) 'is a fundamental, but ill-understood, ill-explained, and much-disputed notion across a wide philosophical spectrum'. The sceptic may or may not find his position paradoxical, but what we should not do is to attack or threaten the sceptic with the two very sharp horns of a dilemma, or a paradox which has been generated in the first place by our own standard classical logical definition of negation. The standard classical theory of negation in a two-valued system does capture, we must admit, a very pervasive sense of negation. But it is also a fact that some important uses of negation are left out in the account that we get from standard logic. The sceptic's use of negation, perhaps, can be better understood as an act of refutation, an illocutionary act where one negates some illocutionary force rather than a proposition.

I wish to refer here to J. R. Searle's distinction between a propositional negation and an illocutionary negation to explain the sceptic's point.[23] This is, I think, quite suitable to explain the Sañjaya-type or the Nāgārjuna-type negation. Such negations were obviously formulated in the context of speech-acts. For example, Sañjaya said, 'I do not say it is so. Nor do I say it is otherwise . . .' and so on. If we construe assertion as an illocutionary act and the proposition is represented by *p*, then we can write, 'I assert that *p*'. By illocutionary negation, we can then write for the sceptic's utterance, 'I do not assert that *p*'. (See Chapter 3.4 for more on this point.) Here the sceptic does not make another assertion such as '*not-p*', for illocutionary negation usually negates the act or the illocutionary force. A propositional negation would leave the illocutionary force unchanged, for the result would be another proposition, a negative one, similarly asserted as the affirmative one.

The sceptic's attitude of non-assertion is therefore a possible one,

[22] B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 162–5. See specially, H. Herzberger, pp. 3–16.
[23] J. R. Searle, pp. 32–3.

and this does not force him into a contradiction. He can very well say, 'I do not say that it is *p*. Nor do I say that it is *not-p*', just as I can say, 'I do not promise to come, nor do I promise not to come'. I think the Buddhist dilemma or tetralemma could be better explained in the context of such illocutionary acts. Consider also the following. Suppose *p* stands for the proposition that everything is empty or that all assertions are false. A Nāgārjunian sceptic has the perfect right to say, 'I do not assert that *p*, nor do I assert that *not-p*'. This does not seem to lead him to any position even when the sceptic participates in the debate only for the sake of refutation.

The sceptic in the Sañjaya–Nāgārjuna tradition is more in line with the Greek sophist or the Pyrrhonist (as described by Sextus Empiricus) than with the Cartesian sceptic. But, nevertheless, the critique of knowledge and evidence that the Indian sceptic has generated can hardly be ignored by an epistemologist in any tradition. In classical India, as I have already indicated, the generally accepted style of philosophizing was the formulation of a *pramāṇa* theory as the basis for a defence of some metaphysical system or other. The Nāgārjunian critique was that this style of philosophizing is at best a distortion and at worst an illusion. For it assumes more than what is warranted by pure experience. The force of such arguments was to persuade us to recognize our philosophic activity, our *pramāṇa* doctrine, for what it is, a fabrication, a convenient myth-making or make-believe, the inherent value of which lies only in making day-to-day life work smoothly and rendering inter-subjective communication successful. In short, the sceptic says that the *pramāṇa* theorist either begs the question (while talking about 'evidence' or 'ways' or 'means' of knowing, such as perception and inference) by using a very questionable criterion to establish the standard for what should count as true, or he regresses to infinity to find out another criterion for this criterion and so on. I have already summed up how the *pramāṇa* theorists in general, and Nyāya in particular, would answer this challenge.

The sceptic's argumentation, through constant practice, is supposed to lead one to an *insight* into the nature of what is ultimately real (*prajñā*). This transition from radical scepticism to some sort of mysticism (where the truth is supposed to dawn upon the person if he can rid himself of all false or unwarranted beliefs) is very pronounced in the Indian tradition, and it seems to be somewhat marginal in the Western tradition. Śrīharṣa claims that his Brahman does not need to be established through any means, for the eternal truth will illuminate

and show itself as soon as the fabricated walls of misconceptions and false beliefs are destroyed, and dialectics only help to destroy them. Jayarāśi, however, does not say anything about how the truth will come to light. For him all philosophic questions remain open, and in practical life he recommends common sense and normal behaviour. He says that those who understand the ultimate purpose recommend that we follow ordinary worldly behaviour (*laukika mārga*), for 'with regard to ordinary behaviour the wise resembles the fool or the child'.[24] Sextus' own commendation is not very far from it: 'We live in accordance with the normal rules of life, undogmatically, seeing that we cannot remain wholly inactive.'[25]

Even the 'sudden illumination' theory of the Indian sceptic-mystic is matched by another comment of Sextus. He compares the sceptic with Apelles, court-painter of Alexander the Great. Once Apelles was painting a horse and wanted to paint the horse's foam. Being unsuccessful several times, in despair he flung a sponge at the picture and, lo and behold, the foam was automatically painted by the throwing of the sponge. Sceptics get their *ataraxia* in this way all of a sudden. A Buddhist Zen master would have loved this analogy.

[24] Jayarāśi, p. 1. Perhaps the expression '*laukika-mārga*' conveys resonance of what has been described in old Bengali literature (Buddhism and Vaisnavism) as the *sahajiyā*. See S. B. Dasgupta, chs. V–VII.

[25] Sextus, p. 23.

3

The Nature of Philosophical Argument

The learned, having examined, decide in favour of one or the other.

KĀLIDĀSA

(*Note.* The aim of this chapter is to provide a somewhat broader perspective of Indian philosophy in the background of which philosophical arguments regarding perception and knowledge were developed. It deals with issues whose relevance with the main theme of this book may not be immediately obvious, but nevertheless the importance of these issues for forming a proper conception of what Indian philosophy is all about (since misconceptions are widespread) can hardly be overestimated. Readers who are interested only in the problems of perception etc. may however skip this chapter and go direct to Part II, Chapter 4.)

3.1 Philosophy versus Soteriology

While the sceptic-dialecticians of ancient India provided the 'destruction-tests' for different philosophical positions as well as the arguments supporting them, the Nyāya method seems to have been recognized by philosophers of different persuasions as a very powerful tool for establishing any theory. The Nyāya method, as we shall see, was in a sense more 'constructive' for it aimed at acquiring evidence for supporting a hypothesis (often a 'positive' one) and thus turning a dubiety to certainty. Although the method was developed initially by the authors of the Nyāya school, one may claim that this was a general philosophic method acceptable also to other schools. Certainly the Buddhist, and sometimes Jaina, authors criticized various aspects of this method, but they offered what may be called 'internal' criticisms and often suggested an improved version of the same. There was thus a tacit agreement among the philosophers of ancient and classical India regarding the efficacy of the Nyāya method. In this chapter I shall give an outline of the method. My object is to show also that 'philosophical' literature became distinguished from religious and soteriological literature through the conscious and deliberate employment of this method.

An elaboration of the point just made may be in order. We

modernists, under the legacy of logical positivism and the analytical tradition, sometimes question the application of the term 'philosophy' to the systems of classical Indian *darśanas*. For each *darśana*, it is commonly argued, had a practical end in view, namely ultimate freedom from *duḥkha*[1] and to that extent the discipline called *darśana* is saturated with soteriology and religious fervour, while 'philosophy' as an academic discipline is devoted to a pure pursuit of knowledge through analysis of concepts, meanings, etc. While this notion of 'philosophy' can be challenged (and has sometimes been challenged), I would accept it as a reasonably clear description of *academic* philosophy and then argue that the *darśanas* of classical India would belong more naturally to this discipline of academic philosophy in spite of their 'soteriological' overtones. I maintain that acceptance of a *pramāṇa* doctrine and the consequent employment of the Nyāya method turned soteriological works into philosophical classics. Thus it is that even a professional (or academic) philosopher today can fruitfully read and share the philosophical insights of such classical authors as Bhartṛhari, Kumārila, Uddyotakara, and Dharmakīrti.

The Nyāya method originated undoubtedly from the tradition of debates and dialectics which prevailed in ancient India. It was the result of an intellectual climate pervaded by public discussions, debates, arguments, and counter-arguments. The method, as I have pointed out in Chapter 2.2, starts with an initial doubt (*saṃśaya*), which sets in motion the process of investigation, and it reaches its conclusion in a decision, certitude or conviction, called *nirṇaya*. The investigation is carried on in accordance with a theory of adequate evidence or a *pramāṇa* doctrine. While the sceptic-dialecticians argued that this method was fundamentally flawed, the philosophers in general asserted their faith in it. The Nyāya method was not however connected with hyperbolic doubt of the Cartesian tradition. For the attempt was to resolve the doubt belonging to a neutral party (called *madhyastha*, 'the person in the middle') through the medium of a strictly controlled debate between two opposite parties.

It is important to note in this connection that philosophy as a discipline has been designated as '*ānvīkṣiki*' by Kauṭilya and Vātsyāyana. The term literally means the method of critical examination or investigation. Vātsyāyana glosses '*ānvīkṣiki*' as '*nyāya-vidyā*', and defines it as the critical examination of *artha* through *pramāṇas*. The

[1] For a slightly different interpretation of the pan-Indian thesis of universal suffering, see B. K. Matilal (1982), pp. 1–21.

word 'pramāṇa' can be explained in this context as adequate evidence, viz. evidence of perception, inference, scriptures etc. The word '*artha*' has a more pervasive meaning, signifying the object that exists, or the fact that is purported to hold, or a doctrine held true. It also stands for action-provoking objects or goals (*upādeya* or *heya*, that is, the objects to be obtained or those to be avoided or discarded). The goal of the philosophical method called Nyāya is the determination of the *artha*. In fact on the basis of Vātsyāyana's comment here, it would not be unnatural for one to hold that philosophy is philosophy mainly because of the employment of the Nyāya method, for otherwise it would have been indistinguishable from soteriology or religion (*adhyātma-vidyā*).

For the sake of brevity I shall quote a passage from Vātsyāyana and summarize some comments of Uddyotakara. Vātsyāyana is commenting here on *Nyāyasūtra* (1.1.1), which gives a list of sixteen 'categories' or items to be studied in the Nyāya school:

Opponent: It is redundant to mention 'doubt etc.' separately (as topics for discourse = *padārtha*), for they are [already] included either in the *pramāṇa*, 'means of knowing', or in the *prameya*, 'objects to be known' (i.e. in the first two items of the list of sixteen in the sūtra), and therefore there are no additional items to be studied.
Answer: This is true. Nevertheless, for the benefit of mankind, four subjects of study (*vidyā* = discipline)—each having its unique subject matter—are prescribed; of them, the study of philosophy (*ānvīkṣikī*) is the fourth, and its unique subject-matter consists of these topics, e.g: DOUBT. Without the specific mention of these items for study, philosophy would have been a mere 'study of the SELF' (i.e. a 'spiritual' discipline), such as the Upaniṣads. Therefore philosophy is shown to have its unique subject-matter by its discussion of such topics as DOUBT.[2]

If the purpose of *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.1 is to give an exhaustive classification of items or real entities, then according to Vātsyāyana the inclusion of the first two items, *pramāṇa* and *prameya*, would have been enough, for it can be shown that the two exhaust the universe of reals. But it goes on to list fourteen other items of special interest beginning with DOUBT. Why? Vātsyāyana answers that this group of fourteen items comprises the Nyāya method, and this method in its turn distinguishes this discipline, 'philosophy' (*ānvīkṣiki*), from religion, soteriology, 'spirituality', or scriptures (*trayī* or even *adhyātmavidyā*).

In traditional India four main branches of study are frequently

[2] Vātsyāyana (Thakur's edn.), p. 2.

mentioned. These are: the scriptures, agro-economy (*vārtā*), statecraft (*daṇḍanīti*), and 'philosophy-and-logic' (*ānvīkṣikī*). Under *ānvīkṣikī* some would include *adhyātmavidyā*, 'spirituality' or 'soteriology' (see Vātsyāyana's concluding comments under *Sūtra* 1.1.1). This creates an exegetical problem. Uddyotakara comments that each branch of learning imparts a special kind of knowledge (*tattvajñāna*), and has a special goal. Thus scriptures (i.e. the Vedic scriptures) impart knowledge of rituals and sacrifices and its goal is the attainment of heaven. Agro-economy imparts knowledge of soil, seed, fertilizer, etc., and its goal lies in rich harvests and the acquisition of wealth. Statecraft gives knowledge of the techniques of truce, rewarding, introducing dissension among enemies, etc., and its aim is the gaining of political power. In a 'spiritual discipline' such as the Upaniṣad, there is knowledge of the self as well as its goal, viz. the final freedom. Now 'philosophy and logic' may constitute a sub-discipline, a sub-branch of learning, under *adhyātmavidyā*; but it will certainly not be a mere 'spiritual' discipline (cf. *adhyātmavidyā-mātra*), for here knowledge of the self is part of the more inclusive knowledge of *means* and *objects* of knowing, and such knowledge is imparted here with the help of the Nyāya method encompassed in the fourteen items, DOUBT etc., listed in the *sūtra* under discussion.

The above comment of Uddyotakara therefore indirectly supports our contention that philosophic inquiry in full accord with the Nyāya method should be properly called *ānvīkṣikī*. This receives further support from Kauṭilya's classification of the traditional four branches of learning: '*Ānvīkṣikī*, the three Vedas, agro-economy and polity—these are the branches of study . . . Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Lokāyata—these constitute *ānvīkṣikī* "philosophy and logic".'[3] Kauṭilya further commented upon the nature of *ānvīkṣikī*:

> Distinguishing, with proper reasoning, between good and evil in the Vedic religion, between profits and non-profits in the domain of agro-economy, and between right policy and wrong policy in the science of polity (or statecraft), and determining the comparative validity and invalidity of all these disciplines under special circumstances, *ānvīkṣikī* (philosophy-and-logic) renders help to people, keeps their minds steady in woe and weal, and produces adroitness of understanding, speech, and action.

A well-known couplet is found in Kauṭilya in praise of philosophy-and-logic as a discipline. This is quoted by Vātsyāyana and many

[3] Kauṭilya, I.2 and 3.

others: 'It illuminates like a lamp all other branches of study, provides means to all actions, and supports all *dharmas*. It is thus enumerated in (the list of) the branches of learning.'[4] Even in modern terms this can serve as a fine defence for indulging ourselves in the study of philosophy!

It is of course debatable whether what we call academic philosophy today can be termed as *ānvīkṣīkī* in Sanskrit. Besides, the Sanskrit term, despite its ancient connotation, was not extensively used by the classical Indian philosophers except some earlier ones. On the other hand, the term *darśana* is much more familiar as a term indicating 'philosophy' in the Indian tradition. A recent Indian philosopher has suggested the following resolution: *Darśana* is actually a study of *prameyas* (the 'objects' of knowledge) according to different philosophical 'points of view'. It is therefore concerned with different metaphysical and soteriological systems. The study of philosophy comprises the study of both *pramāṇas* and *prameyas* (and much else besides). Therefore the field of philosophy must be recognized as wider than that of *darśana*.[5] I have already pointed out (see Chapter 1.3) what kind of relevance the so-called philosophical and theoretical issues may have in the context of a soteriology or attainment of the final freedom. Intelligent people (*prekṣāvat*) act, or are persuaded to act, only after a proper understanding of the goals and motivations, and philosophy based upon epistemological discussion makes such understanding possible.

3.2 *The Nyāya Project of Philosophical Inquiry*

The Nyāyasūtra lists fourteen additional categories, that is, technical items to be studied, besides the means of knowing and objects to be known. The list is divided into two, the first seven categories comprising the 'preliminaries' of a philosophical debate (*nyāya-pūrvāṅga*), and the last seven giving a classification of debates and criteria to be used in such classification. The 'preliminaries' provide a conceptual apparatus consisting of doubt, purpose (of the motivating object), observational data, doctrinal bases, the schema for the argument, supportive reasoning and decision. The last seven consist of three types of debates (acceptable forms of philosophic debate) vāda,

[4] Vātsyāyana (Thakur's edn.), p. 5.

[5] This has been suggested by Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya in private correspondence.

jalpa, and vitaṇḍā, pseudo-evidence (wrong evidence), quibbling, sophistical rejoinders, and situations for courting defeat.

I shall briefly discuss the first seven items and this will give the general outline of the Nyāya project of philosophical inquiry. In the next section I shall comment upon the second group of seven.

Doubt

The goal of the Nyāya method is a *nirṇaya*, a philosophic decision or a conclusion which is certain. Such certitude or decision presupposes a previous indecision, and hence, uncertainty and doubt. A philosophical thesis, under such a view, is therefore not what is dogmatically asserted, but rather what is arrived at through the process of Nyāya inquiry. This means that initially there will arise a doubt because of the conflicting alternative views suggested by the situation or by what we already know prior to the investigation or inquiry. Unlike the Cartesian inquirer, the philosopher here is not asked to force himself into the position of a sceptic who has to doubt whatever and whenever it is possible to doubt. Rather it is the situation itself (aided probably by the imagined dispute between an opponent and a proponent) which will put the philosopher or the neutral inquirer in a state of doubt. This doubt is causally conditioned by an awareness of the conflicting views regarding a particular subject-matter and a sense of wondering about the truth of the matter. Vātsyāyana commented: 'The Nyāya method is applied to neither an (already) ascertained thesis (or object) nor an unknown (i.e. totally unconceived) thesis or object. What then? To a thesis (or object) that has been a matter of doubt.'[6] Unless possibilities are suggested, we do not wish to undertake the task of investigation.

Purpose

An actual doubt, however, cannot by itself necessitate the required inquiry. The inquirer or the philosopher must have, it is believed, some *prayojana*, 'purpose', some intended goal in mind. Philosophic inquiry, according to this view, does not originate in our idle curiosity, nor is it to be regarded as a purposeless exercise. Some people believe that philosophic inquiry is aimed at the four prescribed goals—goals that are well known as the goals of human life in the Indian context; *dharma*, 'religio-ethical duties', *artha*, 'wealth', *kāma*, 'sexual and other pleasures', and *mokṣa*, 'final release'. Uddyotakara, however, rejects

[6] Vātsyāyana (Thakur's edn.), p. 2.

this position and clearly states that the *purpose* of philosophic activity coincides with the general aim of man, viz. pursuit of happiness and avoidance of unhappiness. Hence, for Uddyotakara, the purpose of philosophy need not be tied essentially to the prescribed goals of a socio-religious system. Happiness and unhappiness are however understood here as two very pervasive concepts such that, Uddyotakara argues, all other purposes, goals, intentions, and desires can be included under this rubric: pursuit of happiness and avoidance of unhappiness. An inquiry cannot be undertaken aimlessly, for that goes against the rational behaviour of mankind (see *Nyāyasūtra* 1.2.24). Philosophic inquiry is sustained by such a rational purpose.

It will be pointed out that such a conception of the purpose of philosophic inquiry seems to be very different from the current, modern conception of the 'aim' of philosophy as 'logical clarification of thoughts' Wittgenstein) or the conception of philosophy as 'a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language'.[7] It may also be shown that the clarification of thoughts as one of the aims of philosophy is not necessarily a new idea of Wittgenstein for this is also reflected in the Socratic idea of philosophy ('The unexamined life is not worth living'). However, the required clarification of thoughts cannot just appear in a vacuum for it is conceivable that such a clarification would generate a sense of satisfaction in the inquirer, and 'happiness' in this context, as I have already indicated, is a concept broad enough to include such a sense of satisfaction and delight. A man becomes no doubt 'happy' even when he disentangles a knot.

Observational data and doctrinal bases

Besides doubt and purpose an inquiry must have something to go upon. There must be observed data and other principles which could be used as premises of the argument to follow. The *Nyāyasūtra* covers these matters under two technical terms, *dṛṣṭānta* and *siddhānta*, which I translate by 'observational data' and 'doctrinal bases'. It is wrong to translate 'dṛṣṭānta' as an 'example' or even as 'an analogical case' in this context, as Uddyotakara clearly points out under *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.25. The Diṅnāga–Vasubandhu school apparently understood by *dṛṣṭānta* an analogical case and accordingly criticized it to be a redundant category, for it was shown to be identifiable with either the third 'means of knowing' (*pramāṇa*) called *upamāna*, 'analogy', or the

[7] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, sec. 109, p. 47e; *Tractatus*, sec. 4.112.

third step called the 'exemplification' step of the five-step schema for the argument (cf. *udāharaṇa*). It was argued that if *dṛṣṭānta* is for the sake of imparting knowledge of similarity, then it is nothing but what is called *upamāna*, 'analogy', as a means of knowledge. Uddyotakara rejects this Buddhist criticism by pointing out that *dṛṣṭānta* would stand for any 'observational data' that would be beyond dispute and both common people and the philosophical inquirer (*parīkṣaka*) would therefore find them equally acceptable (cf. *buddhisāmya*). 'Analogy' as a means of knowledge, on the other hand, is a different matter altogether. It is, as Uddyotakara explains, a case where a newly perceived species is designated by a name learnt from a reliable source, on the basis of similarity between the new species and an already familiar one. I learn from a book, say, that a *gavaya* is a species of animal which resembles a (familiar) cow in noticeable respects and later on in the proper place, after observing such similarity in an animal, I acquire a piece of knowledge that this is the animal *gavaya*. Observational data, on the other hand, would be only those observed similarities and other data that would be acceptable to both the proponent and the opponent in a debate.[8]

The doctrinal bases or principles (*siddhānta*) are classified under four headings in *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.27. The first among them are those principles that are non-observational but nevertheless accepted by all parties alike (*Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.28). Uddyotakara explains that they are the subject-matter of everybody's understanding (*sarveṣām sampratipattiviṣayaḥ*). I have noted that they are non-observational. We may call them somewhat loosely the *a priori* principles universally followed. Uddyotakara's example was: The means of knowing establishes the object of knowledge or, evidence establishes the conclusion. Another example would probably be: The effect presupposes causal conditions.

It was probably Diṅnāga (?) who argued that the observational data and the first type of doctrinal bases (*sarvatantra-siddhānta*), need hardly be distinguished from each other as far as their universal acceptability is concerned. Uddyotakara answers this point by saying that in spite of their shared feature of universal acceptability, one should be distinguished from the other on another ground. Observational data supply the ground or data for inference and verbal testimony; they are primarily based upon perception. But the so-called omnipresent principles (principles present in all systematic disciplines and philo-

[8] Uddyotakara (B), p. 103.

sophical schools), what I am inclined to call the *a priori*, do not provide the ground for inference in the same way. The first is essentially based upon perception, but the second is not necessarily so. It is rather a pity that Uddyotakara was not more articulate than the foregoing statement in marking out the distinction between the data and the nearly *a priori* principles (*Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.28).

It may be noted here that so-called *a priori* principles were never clearly noted or recognized as *a priori* in the Indian tradition except for the fact that their self-evident nature and universal acceptability along with their indispensability were repeatedly insisted upon. Even their characteristic necessity was not unnoticed for the impossibility of their being otherwise has often been emphasized, but not their *a priority*. In this background, the above Buddhist–Uddyotakara dispute over the distinguishability of the data and the *a priori* becomes interesting. For imperviousness of Indian philosophers in general towards the *a priori* may be reminiscent of the extreme sort of empiricism advocated by J. S. Mill. It must however be noted that these classical Indian philosophers did not explicitly argue that all logical truths such as the law of contradiction or excluded middle are finally derived from experience. This consideration shows however that there was much more substance to the Buddhist (Diṅnāga's?) critique that *dṛṣṭānta*, 'empirical data' and *sarvatantra-siddhānta*, the *a priori* principles, can be lumped together as one item for they both have the property of universal acceptability. This argument would be valid as long as the *a priori* nature of the latter is not brought to the fore and properly emphasized. (I shall not go into a discussion of the other three doctrinal bases in the present context.)

The schema for the argument

The next item is called *avayava*, 'limbs'. This gives the generally acceptable schema for a philosophical argument. A philosophical argument as envisioned here is an inference based upon evidence. The full articulation of this inference consists of five steps, each step being a demonstration of different parts of the process by which a conclusion is reached. Each step is accordingly called a limb, a member, or a part of the five-membered (full) demonstration of the argument. The steps are:[9]

[9] Akṣapāda Gotama, *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.32–9.

Statement of the position
Citing of the evidence
Invoking the general principle with an example
Subsuming the present case under the general rule
Statement of the position as proven thereby.

Example
There is fire on that hill.
For there is smoke there.
Wherever there is smoke there is fire, as in the kitchen.
There is smoke on that hill 'accordingly' (= *tathā*).
Therefore there is fire there (to be sure).

Down the centuries philosophers in India disputed whether all these five steps are necessary for a fully articulated argument, or whether only two or three would be sufficient. But this dispute need not engage our attention here. In the schema given above, the first step is called *pratijñā*, where one states what one is going to prove. The second step assigns a reason or ground or evidence. The third step articulates the logical connection (usually that of invariance) between the piece of evidence adduced and what is to be proved in the case under consideration. This connection is required to be supported by some empirical example. Obviously this is a specific use of an empirical datum or *dṛṣṭānta*, which lends support to the general statement that involves the statement of the 'invariance' relation. This is therefore part of the procedure of proof. Hence Uddyotakara may be right in countering Diṅnāga's criticism that the item called 'observational data' and the example that is part of the third step of the schema for the argument are indistinguishable. One is the general notion of the empirical data, the other is a specific use of them.

The most important step here is however the fourth step, which combines the second and the third to formulate what may be called the full-fledged premise of the argument before the conclusion is drawn in the fifth step. This is supposed to show both facts, viz. that the evidence adduced is invariant with what we are going to prove and that it is unquestionably present in the case under consideration. The cryptic expression '*tathā*' carries this import all by itself. The fifth step therefore repeats the first step with the additional claim that it has now been proven or established (i.e. QED).

Tarka: supportive argument (reductio)

The next component of the Nyāya method is called '*tarka*', which takes the form of a supportive argument but unlike the previous one, it is not directly based upon empirical evidence. The real nature of *tarka* (literally, 'reasoning', 'argument') has been the subject-matter of controversy among Indian philosophers throughout history. It transpired later in the history of Indian philosophy that we must understand by it some sort of a *reductio ad absurdum*, where an appeal to some absurdity or absurd consequence (*prasaṅga*) is made in order to lend an indirect support to a positive thesis. It is shown in fact that the opposite thesis leads to absurdities.[10]

The Naiyāyikas did not accept this type of 'reasoning', where no empirical evidence is used, as a *pramāṇa*, i.e. as a means leading to a positive piece of knowledge. It is regarded only as an argument (*yukti*) that is subservient or conducive to knowledge. Both ancient (the Jainas) and modern (Sukhlalji Saṅghavi) writers have criticized Nyāya for not according the full status of *pramāṇa* to this item (*tarka*). I think this hesitation on the part of the Naiyāyikas is worth noting. For whatever a *tarka* is, it is not an inference based upon some empirical evidence. It is rather an argument where we use generally the *a priori* principles only, or what may be closest to the *a priori* principles in the Indian tradition. The argument moves on, exploiting paradoxes and absurdities and extracting contradictions. It is the closest kin of the *reductio*, if it is not one already. (See next section.)

This indirect reasoning, which is called *tarka* in the Nyāya method, and which I am inclined to call *a priori* reasoning, is described under *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.1 as that which is employed for the sake of knowledge or truth but does not lead to a truth all by itself. Vātsyāyana and Uddyotakara explain that it cannot impart empirical knowledge by itself for it cannot generate the required certainty. Purely *a priori* certainty is not an acceptable certainty in a properly empirical philosophy!

This reluctance of the Naiyāyikas to accept the *reductio* as an independent *pramāṇa* seems to reveal how much emphasis the *pramāṇa* theorists in general put upon empirical knowledge as opposed to the *a priori*. A piece of empirical knowledge must have at the end a piece of empirical evidence in support. When the adequacy of such evidence is

[10] Vātsyāyana under *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.40 for early characterization of *tarka*. For later characterizations, see Udayana, *Nyāyakusumāñjali*, ch. III, verse 7, and *vṛtti* on the verse, pp. 342–51. See S. Saṅghavi, pp. 82–4.

called in question, a *reductio* argument, it is claimed, may generate the required certainty. But when no empirical evidence is forthcoming, the *reductio* will lose its utility. In this way, I think, the *pramāṇa* theorists were well equipped to resist the attempts of the sceptic-dialecticians who generally used the *reductio's* (*prasaṅga*) to refute any philosophical position.

Nirṇaya: decision

The Nyāya project uses in this way two broadly different types of argument as its components: a direct demonstration of an inference based upon empirical evidence (the fivefold schema), and an *a priori* reasoning (a *reductio*) to show indirectly the plausibility of a thesis. If a direct proof by the fivefold schema is weakened by raising doubt about the acceptability of some premise the indirect reasoning is supposed to strengthen the case. The Nyāya method with the help of these two 'proof-procedures' culminates in a *nirṇaya*, a 'philosophic decision' or 'conclusion'. In sum, the Nyāya model for philosophic inquiry is a project that starts with a doubt because of the presence of conflicting evidence and taking into consideration the observational data and various doctrinal principles (including the *a priori* and the self-evident ones), arguments are formulated in the given fivefold schema and supported, if necessary, by the indirect reasoning or *reductio*, leading to a decision one way or other. There is no doubt that this model originated in the very ancient Indian discussion of the art of disputation and philosophic debate. In other words, we may say that the philosophic method originated in India from the ancient Indian dialectic, which was represented in a much crystallized form by the last seven items of the list found in *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.1. I shall devote the next section to the discussion of the ancient Indian dialectic, for this brief review will clarify further the nature of philosophical activity of classical India.

3.3 Debate and Dialectic

I have chosen the term 'dialectic' to refer to the art of philosophic disputation in ancient India, as this was obviously the Indian counterpart of the Greek art of discussion or logical controversy. Philosophical thoughts in ancient times filtered through the art of disputation and this was as much true of ancient Greece as it was of ancient India. But as in the case of many other concepts, the concept of Indian dialectic has only a 'family resemblance' with the notion of

dialectic found in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Let me first explain the Indian concept of philosophic debate and the kind of arguments I intend to call 'dialectic'.

During the *śramaṇa* (post-Upanisadic) period of Indian philosophy, the intellectual climate was brisk, critical, and controversial. Topics that came under fire were not only the organized religion and ritualism of Vedic orthodoxy but also the established social codes and moral norms, as well as the knowledge-claims regarding the final destiny of man. In such an environment, debate (by which I mean controversies, question-and-answers, and discussions) was the order of the day. No subject was considered too sacred for criticism and refutation. These debates sometimes degenerated inevitably into wrangling and bitter verbal battles. That might have been the reason that the Buddha in the *Nikāyas* asked his pupils to avoid fruitless debates. It was however not very easy in those days to avoid debates. That is why in the *Upāyahṛdaya*, one of the early Buddhist debate manuals, the author first raises the opponent's point that one should not enter into a debate with others (*vādo na kartavyaḥ*) and then argues elaborately that it is necessary to enter into a debate if one is to have any hope of maintaining, defending, and propagating one's own religious and philosophical convictions. Not only that, ordinary people may be misled by a crafty debater into immoral actions and false beliefs. Therefore some professional training in the art of debate is essential for a philosopher.[11]

Manuals for the professional debate must have been written for different schools for training the debater in the various types of debate, arguments, tricky devices, and in the checks or grounds for censure or defeat. The canons of Buddhism and Jainism contain frequent references to many technical terms of the art of disputation. Texts like *Kathāvastu* (recorded at the Buddhist council at *c.*255 BC) report on the various topics for debates in which Buddhist monks should participate as well as on the various ways of holding debates. The early debate-manuals however are not available to us today. But we have some later, crystallized versions of them in such texts as the *Upāyahṛdaya*, Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmi*, the *Caraka-Saṃhitā*, and the *Nyāyasūtra*. In giving a brief exposition of the rules and procedures of debate, I shall follow the *Nyāyasūtra* because the discussion here appears to be more systematic than in the others.

[11] For the Buddha's comment, *Dīghanikāya*, I. 33. See also *Upāyahṛdaya*, p. 3.

Originally, it seems to me that debate was a respectable vocation and a natural expectation when two philosophers met in a friendly session. Thus it is that Janaka, the philosopher-king of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, asks Yājñavalkya who went to him one morning, 'What is on your mind today, Yājñavalkya? Do you wish to receive a gift of cattle or do you wish to have a philosophic discussion with me on subtle matters?' Yājñavalkya replied, 'I have come wishing both.' And then followed a friendly debate between them. The quality of the debate obviously depended upon the debaters or participants. Nāgasena the Buddhist monk made the following comment, probably facetiously, on the types of debate in reply to King Milinda's questions:

MILINDA: Reverend Sir, will you debate with me again?

NĀGASENA: If your Majesty will debate as a scholar, yes, but if you will debate as a king, no.

MILINDA: How is it then that scholars debate?

NĀGASENA: When scholars debate one with the other, your Majesty, there is summing up and unravelling, there is also defeat, and yet the scholars do not get angry at it. Thus do the scholars debate, your Majesty.

MILINDA: And how do kings debate?

NĀGASENA: When kings debate, your Majesty, they state a proposition, and if anyone differs from them, they order his punishment saying 'Inflict punishment upon him'. Thus, your Majesty, do kings debate.[12]

The Jaina canon *Sthānāṅga* refers to four types of refutation in a 'tricky' debate.[13] First, there is the trick of confounding the opponent by using verbiage and thereby trying to give him a 'run-round' (*yāpaka-hetu*). Second, there is the direct refutation with a valid reason by confounding the opponent's trick (*sthāpaka-hetu*). Obviously the first kind of debate can be countered with the second one. Third, there is the argument based upon equivocation (*vyaṃsaka-hetu*). This can be countered with the fourth kind called *luṣaka*, by exposing the equivocation and thereby confounding the opponent.

Socrates seems to have referred to this type of broad division of the debate procedure, as he mentions to Meno:

If my questioner were one of the clever, disputatious, and quarrelsome kind, I should say to him, 'You have heard my answer. If it is wrong, it is for you to take up the argument and refute it.' However, when friendly people, like you and me, want to converse with each other, one's reply must be milder and

[12] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, ch. IV, Brāhmaṇa, 1, *Milinda Pañho*, 2.6.

[13] See E. Solomon, pp. 51 f.

more conducive to discussion. By that I mean that it must not only be true, but must employ terms with which the questioner admits he is familiar.[14]

The debate between 'friendly people', as Socrates puts it, does not seem very different from the kind of debate which Caraka described as *sandhāya saṃbhāṣa* 'debate among fellow-scholars who are friends'. And this is to be contrasted with what Socrates described as debate with a disputatious person. In Caraka's terminology, this is the other kind of debate which is actually a verbal fight (*vigraha*).

Caraka broadly divides debates into two types. The first is held with a fellow-scholar and in a spirit of co-operation (*sandhāya saṃbhāṣa*) but the second in a spirit of opposition and hostility (*vigṛhya*). Caraka gives an elaborate description about what must be done by a debater before agreeing to enter into a debate, viz. examination of the strength of the opponent, assessment of the level of knowledge of the jury and the audience etc. It is humorously described how if the opponent or the audience is stupid, one can ensure victory by 'a bag of tricks'. This is obviously with reference to the hostile debate. Caraka further divides the hostile debate into *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*. In *jalpa*, both sides establish their position with arguments and try to refute each other. For example, one side maintains 'There is rebirth', while the other 'There is no rebirth', and each side adduces reason to support as well as to controvert the other. In *vitaṇḍā*, one tries only to censure the other without establishing anything.

Nyāyasūtra uses the same terms in slightly different senses, as we shall see presently. The *Nyāyasūtra* classification of debate was more systematic and hence carried more authority in philosophical circles. Hence Dharmakīrti found it fit to refute some of the Nyāya dogmas about the principles of debate in his *Vādanyāya*. The name for philosophic debate in the *Nyāyasūtra* is *kathā*, literally, speech, discussion. It notes three kinds of debate, *vāda*, *jalpa*, and *vitaṇḍā*. The first kind corresponds to the friendly and congenial debate in Caraka (*sandhāya*). It is supposed to have the following characteristics:[15]

(1) There should be a thesis and a counter-thesis mutually opposing each other. Such a situation arises when mutually incompatible attributes are ascribed to the same subject (cf. *ekādhikaraṇa*, Vātsyāyana). Uddyotakara further qualifies it by saying that such contradictory attributions are to be made to the same subject, and

[14] Plato, *Meno*, 75 c–d. [15] Akṣapāda Gotama, *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.2.1.

neither attribution should be taken, for the purpose of the debate, to be finally decided.

(2) The proving, i.e. establishing, and disproving of either of the theses, should be based upon evidence (*pramāṇa*) and argument (*tarka*). (See 3.2.)

(3) Each side should mention the standard five steps in the demonstration of one's reasoning. (See 3.2 for the five-fold schema for argument.)

(4) The reasoning should not entail contradictions with any tenet, or accepted doctrine, or any *a priori* or self-evident principle.

This debate is usually to be held between the teacher and the students or between friendly philosophers where each participant is a seeker after truth (*tatvabubhutsu*).

One may wonder whether in this type of debate there may arise any censure or defeat-situation, for surely it is not the nature of a seeker after truth to humiliate somebody with defeat. But remember what Nāgasena said to Milinda. There will be defeat or censure (*nigraha*) in this debate but with no animosity, for it will be a fair game. The detection of a faulty reason is also recognized as a ground for defeat as *Nyāyasūtra* 5.2.2 informs us. Since there will be a refutation (disproving) of the untenable thesis, it will entail a situation for courting defeat though it will be based solely on sound evidence and argument. Further, the third and fourth characteristics indicate that there may be censure based on some additional ground. Censure arises also when the debater fails to mention exactly all the five steps, i.e. mentions either less (in which case it is a censure called the 'insufficient' *hīna*), or more (in which case it is a censure called 'redundant' *adhika*). The fourth characteristic, according to Uddyotakara, refers to the possibility of a censure based upon falsification of an accepted doctrine (*apasiddhānta*).

The second type of debate, *jalpa*, is held between equals, i.e. two rival parties, and the explicit goal here is a victory (*vijaya*) which may not necessarily coincide with the establishment of truth. Here we come to the discussion of 'tricky' debates that I have alluded to earlier. According to Uddyotakara, this debate will share only the first two characteristics of the first type and not the last two. For the last two characteristics imply that only certain types of censure are applicable here and not others. The *jalpa* debate will include, apart from the first two, the following condition, call it (3). (This only replaces (3) in the

above list of characteristics for the first type, the other two conditions remaining the same.)[16]

(3) Proving and rebuttal are based upon quibbling or equivocation (*chala*), sophistical rejoinder or false parity of reasoning (*jāti*) and censure of all kinds.

It may be pointed out that equivocation and false or unwarranted parities can neither prove nor disprove anything. Uddyotakara concedes the point and says that the debater uses these tricks anyway, when he is unable to defend himself or censure the opponent on fair grounds. Since victory is the goal, such tricks are allowed according to the rules of the game, so to speak. The onus is on the opponent to stop him or to 'call his bluff'. The *Nyāyasūtra* lists three varieties of equivocation, and twenty-four varieties of rejoinder based upon parity of reasoning (*jāti*)—(twenty in the *Upāyahṛdaya*). The ways of censuring a debate are given in the *Nyāyasūtra* as twenty-two. In other words, it notes that in twenty-two ways a debate might be brought to a close with a decision where one side wins and the other side loses. These are called 'situations for courting defeat'. The debate is thus turned into a game and the soundness of reason by itself cannot ensure victory, for as in a game, the strategy of the debater becomes an important factor. Udayana says that the debater loses as soon as he shows his incompetence, i.e. he acts in a way that indicates his confusion. Uddyotakara points out that even when the debater uses a sound reason he may not win, for he may very well be confronted with a sophistical rejoinder; and being so confronted if he fails to assert his sound reason with confidence, he may lose.[17]

Most of the twenty-two varieties of 'checks' in the game of debate or 'situations for courting defeat' are however reasons of common sense. For example, starting a debate to prove a thesis, one cannot in course of the debate abandon the thesis or contradit it (*pratijñā-hāni* or *pratijñā-virodha*). Nor can one be evasive (*vikṣepa*) or approve a contrary view (*matānujñā*). But the most serious offence would be to use some unsound or fallacious reason. For if that is detected, the debater immediately loses. This refers to the other item on the list: pseudo-evidence or *hetvābhāsa*.

The third type of debate, *vitaṇḍā*, is more controversial in nature and, it seems to me, philosophically more interesting. It is said to be

[16] Ibid., 1.2.2 and 1.2.3.

[17] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 684.

characterized by the lack of any attempt to prove the counter-thesis. In other words the debater here is engaged simply in the rebuttal of a position but does not give the opponent a chance to attack his own position. Some have thought however that this is therefore not a 'fair' game. Some have even maintained that since refutation (*dūṣaṇamātra*) is the sole purpose of this type of debate, the debater may claim not to have any position or not to believe in any. This was obviously the way out for the sceptics, the sceptic-sophists, the sceptic-Buddhists (Mādhyamikas), the sceptic-monists, or even the sceptic-materialists (*Cārvāka*). (See Chapter 2.4.)

This raises two related questions. First, is it possible to enter into a debate without believing in anything, only for the sake of rebuttal? Second, even if it is possible, what value would it have or what purpose (*prayojana*) would it serve, save victory, when such a rebuttal is done by the questionable tricks established in *jalpa*, i.e. the second type of debate? In other words, what lasting value can we attach to a refutation that is based solely upon either equivocation or (false) parity of reasoning or both? The first question is more fundamental and it has been dealt with already.

Regarding the second question, it was noted that a debater cannot simply refute the opponent by bluff or tricks unless, of course, he is allowed by the opponent to get away with it. But it so happens that some equivocations or reasonings based on parities are the hardest things to recognize. It is conceivable that sometimes the debater is not consciously trying to present an unsound reasoning in refutation. Using modern jargon we may call it a 'linguistic snare' or a philosophic puzzle. I can cite at least two of the 'sophistical rejoinders' or rejoinders based on parity (the last two in the *jāti* list), *nityasamā* and *kāryasamā*, which under one interpretation may generate genuine philosophic puzzles, rather than being simply tricky arguments for refutation.

The Naiyāyikas were not always very happy in supporting the *jalpa* debate as serving any good purpose. *Nyāyasūtra* 4.2.50 says enigmatically that the second or the third type of debate is meant for the protection of one's learning when the learner is apparently a young beginner, so as not to be swept away by some tricky debater into believing the false doctrine. Sometimes it is emphasized that they render some negative benefit in the sense that by studying those tricky devices one can be on guard and not easily be defeated by such tricks, for if the debater can uncover the trick of the opponent, he wins. In any

case in the Buddhist tradition, Dharmakīrti (in *Nyāyabindu*) explicitly denounced such tricks and he had every right to do so. But as I have already noted, sometimes philosophers use arguments which are seemingly plausible and it takes another equally gifted philosopher to uncover that such and such arguments were based on an (unconscious) equivocation. We need not suspect that the philosopher in question was deliberately trying to trick us.[18]

The third type of debate (*vitaṇḍā*) has evoked much criticism. If the goal here is also victory as it is in the second type, then it is felt that this victory is earned not only through tricks but also by motiveless malignity. Vātsyāyana argues that a debater in this case cannot be entirely without a motive. One may point out that since the debater here (*vaitaṇḍika*) does not establish a position, it is possible that he does not have a position to defend. But can there be any debater without a position? Can there be any person who does not believe in anything? In fact, according to Vātsyāyana, the third type of debate can easily be put to an end by asking the debater what is his position or purpose for debating. If he declines, he should forfeit his right to debate. If he says simply that his purpose (motive) is to refute the opponent then also he concedes a position, viz. refutation of the opponent. In any case, he can be shown in this way that he cannot conceivably participate in the third type of debate when he concedes a position of his own. It is however by no means clear why a debater in the third case cannot consistently maintain that he only wants to refute the opponent and the onus of proving anything lies with the opponent, not with him. In fact many respectable philosophers would opt for 'refutation-only' of rival views and avoid proving anything for (i) they are truly sceptics and would like to suspend judgement, or (ii) their truths are self-evident and hence require no proof. (For examples of the first type, see Jayarāśi, and for the second, see Śriharṣa.)

In fact it is not necessary that a debater in the third type of debate should always be looking for victory as the goal and using tricky devices. It is conceivable that his business is also to seek after truth. In other words, we may not be dealing here with a clever charlatan but with a genuine seeker after truth. Noticing this possibility, some Gauḍa Naiyāyikas such as Sānātani talked about a fourfold classification of debate: (i) *vāda*, (ii) *vāda-vitaṇḍā*, (iii) *jalpa*, (iv) *jalpa-vitaṇḍā*, the first two being for the honest seekers after truth and the last for

[18] Dharmakīrti, *Nyāyabindu*, ch. III, sūtras 139–40. Also his introductory comments in *Vādanyāya*.

those proud people who intend to defeat others. Tricky devices are allowable therefore only in the last two and not in the first two.[19]

3.4 *Negation versus Refutation*

An honest and fair debate aimed at 'refutation-only' of the opponent's thesis is philosophically a more fruitful and powerful concept and certainly it has its adherents. Specially for the sceptics or the sceptic-mystics, a debate of this type is positively helpful. For if a universal scepticism has to be maintained at all feasibly, the debater must only refute the position that is positively offered. He cannot defend any position. We may add that such scepticism itself can neither be formulated nor defended as a position in this sense. The debater has to allow his opponent to formulate his position before he can proceed to refute it. (See also Chapter 2.4.)

Is not the negation of a position another position? If the proposition p is refuted, does it not amount to be the defence of the not-p? This was actually the import of the criticisms made of *vitaṇḍā* by Vātsāyana and Uddyotakara. But the sceptic-debater after refuting p will only proceed under the circumstances (i.e. being faced with such a question) to refute not-p. This will probably imply that p and not-p do not exhaust the possibilities and that might mean in turn that the law of excluded middle does not apply here. But notice that the law of non-contradiction is not violated here. For it is possible for p and not-p to be both false under such interpretation. It is only when both are held to be true that the law of non-contradiction is violated. Or we can say, if one position is proven to be true the other is rendered false thereby but not, if one is proven to be false the other would be true.

Alternatively, we may hold that the refutation of a position need not amount to one's commitment to the 'negation' of the proposition involved. Refutation of such a debater may be taken as an 'illocutionary' negation, distinct from a 'propositional' negation. For example Sañjaya being asked about the after-life, said: 'I do not say there is an after-life'. This can be represented in the manner of J. Searle:[20]

$$\text{(A)} \quad \sim \vdash (\exists x)(x \text{ is } F)$$

This is an illocutionary negation and should be distinguished from the propositional denials:

[19] For Sānātani's view see Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 620. See also B. K. Matilal (1977), p. 92.

[20] J. R. Searle, pp. 32–3.

(B) (I say) 'There is no after-life'.
$\vdash \sim (\exists x)(x \text{ is } F)$

It would clearly be a mistake, as Searle has argued, to blur the distinction between the two. In the same vein, Sañjaya may also be allowed to say:

(C) $\sim \vdash \sim (\exists x)(x \text{ is } F)$

Notice that (C) does not contradict (A). Hence both (C) and (A) can be consistently held or asserted by Sañjaya: Neither do I say that there is an after-life nor do I say that there is none.

Consider the following hypothetical debate modelled after a verse of Nāgārjuna.[21]

(1) Is a thing (*bhāva*) produced from itself?
(1a) No.
(2) Is it produced from something other than itself?
(2a) No.
(3) Is it produced from both itself and the other?
(3a) No.
(4) Is it produced from neither or nothing?
(this is equivalent to: Is it not produced at all?)
(4a) No.

It is clear that in this formulation (1) and (2) do not exhaust the possibilities, for it is possible for a thing to be produced partly from itself and partly from others. Hence (3) is a possible formulation which is not exhausted by the rejection of (1) and (2). Now, the question arises: have we exhausted all the possibilities of, say, production from something or other, by the three rejections (1a), (2a), and (3a)? If we have, then the fourth position will have to be a rejection of the production itself. Nāgārjuna however asks us, by 4a, to reject this position too! This raises the problem about the subject that we are talking about here. If refutation of the refutation of production amounts to production, then we are back in the game, i.e. with one of the three alternatives, (1), (2), or (3). But they have already been rejected. Therefore it would be argued that the rejection in (4a), the rejection of the rejection of production, should not be construed, at least in the Nāgārjunian sense of rejection, as a position affirming production. This can be taken to be a special case of the general point

[21] Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, ch. 1, verse 1.

we are discussing here. The rejection of a position need not always amount to a counter-position. If this is agreed, then it is quite feasible for a debater to conduct an honest (non-tricky) form of debate consisting of refutation or 'rejection-only'. Such a debate can be called *vāda-vitaṇḍā*.

In fact the aim of the debater in this case is to reduce the opponent's position to absurdities. In spite of what I have argued here, it is clear that not all Buddhists were happy about *vitaṇḍā*. Dharmakīrti clearly rejects this form of debate. And we may imagine that in this rejection he probably followed Vasubandhu and Diṅnāga.

Udayana first refers to Sānātani who mentioned the variety called *vāda-vitaṇḍā*, an honest form of debate consisting of refutation only, and then argues that this would be an impossibility. He reasons as follows: A debater who is also a seeker after truth (as he should be if he is participating in a *vāda*) can hardly remain content with mere refutation. For if he simply refutes the opponent's reason, truth is not determined thereby. Determination of the truth depends upon some means (*sādhana*). If he does not refute the opponent's reason however, truth is equally undetermined, for doubt regarding its falsification has not been removed. If he does not even care for the opponent's reason, he cannot be said to be determining truth at all. In any case determination of truth cannot be done simply by refutation. The debater must admit some standard *means* for refutation.

Udayana's criticism missed the point that I have already made. Truth may be either self-evident or unprovable according to a debater; in either case he does not need a reason to prove it or determine it; Śriharṣa has elaborately criticized this argument of Udayana in his *Kaṇḍanakhaṇḍakhādya*.

The classification of debate into the one for seeking after truth and the other for victory is reminiscent of Plato's way of contrasting what he called 'dialectic' with 'eristic' or the art of quarrelling. It is clearly indicated in Plato that the aim of the procedure he sometimes calls 'eristic' is to win the argument whereas the aim of dialectic is to discover truth.[22] The dialogue that is illustrated in Euthydemus may remind one of the *jalpa* or *vigṛhya kathā* in the Indian tradition. The debater cares nothing for truth but uses any and every device that gives the appearance of winning an argument. The word '*vigraha*' in Sanskrit means 'a battle' or 'a combat' and the description of *jalpa*

[22] R. Robinson, p. 85.

indicates that it was a sort of verbal battle. The appropriate picture for 'eristic' in Plato was a verbal combat.

The art of dialectic became a technique in the hands of Aristotle who undertook to write a handbook of dialectic, *Topics*. The character of dialectic was turned into a dubious game of debate, an exercise for the muscles of the intellect. The *Topics* of Aristotle therefore resembles at least in the above sense the *vivāda-śāstras* of ancient India. But perhaps this is too broad a generalization. Let me qualify it. Aristotle deals with dialectic in the *Topics* and what he calls 'syllogism' in the *Analytics*. One of the distinctions is underlined by him as follows: a question is treated 'in accordance with opinion' in the work on dialectic and 'in accordance with truth' in the work on syllogism. Under syllogism, Aristotle studies mainly inferences based upon class-inclusion. But in a broader sense, syllogism for Aristotle stands for any argument in which, after certain propositions have been assumed, there necessarily results a proposition other than these assumptions just because of these assumptions. Using this notion of syllogism, Aristotle says that every dialectical argument is either a syllogism or an epagoge.[23] The general characterization of epagoge is that it approaches the universal from the particulars (although other varieties are also recognized), and this is reminiscent of induction of later times. Aristotle says that the debater must admit an epagoge supported by instances unless he can produce a negative instance.[24]

The most pervasive form of refutation practised by Socrates is called elenchus. An elenchus is, in the narrower sense, a form of cross-examination and refutation. In the wider sense it means examining a person's statement by asking him questions and then further questions in the hope that the answerer will finally feel that he must agree to a position that entails the falsehood of his original assertion. The Platonic idea of an elenchus, the one that he approved, was a contest in which both sides recognize openly that the questioner was trying to refute and the answerer was trying not to be refuted. Recently G. Vlastos has said that although the Socratic elenchus is also used constructively, Socrates seems to be claiming to prove the falsehood of the refutand by simply showing inconsistency of the interlocutor's explicit moral belief, p, with some of his other beliefs, q and r (for neither of which has any argument been given). This was a somewhat unjustified claim![25]

[23] Aristotle, *Topics*, I.12 (105a).

[24] Aristotle, *On Sophistical Refutations*, 165b.

[25] R. Robinson, p. 19. Also G. Vlastos, pp. 712–13.

If the Socratic elenchus was a purely destructive instrument, as has sometimes been said, then it had some similarity with the *vitaṇḍā* type of debate. In the *jalpa* type, the questioner tries not only to refute but also to establish the contrary position, and the answerer also tries to defend his position as well as refute the counter-position. Plato however in his middle and later dialogues transforms, perhaps unconsciously, the destructive tool of Socrates, the elenchus, into his own new constructive instrument of dialectic. In other words, he harnesses the tool of his teacher to constructive purposes and thereby incorporates it into the larger whole which he calls dialectic.[26] M. Kneale has remarked that perhaps Plato himself was confused in this matter.[27] But even this modified form of elenchus would hardly resemble *jalpa*, for *jalpa* can hardly be said to be a road to truth or science. *Jalpa* is explicitly stated to be for victory and it may be argued that in some cases, victory and the establishment of truth may coincide with each other. But still *jalpa* can hardly approximate the dialectic in its Platonic sense, for Plato emphatically declares dialectic to be the noblest as well as the most useful method.

The specific nature of the Platonic dialectic however remains ever elusive to a reader of Plato. He recommends the dialectical method with great enthusiasm. In the *Republic* it is said that dialectic seeks 'what each thing is', the abiding element in the thing. It is a search for definitions. In fact dialectic is hardly distinguishable in Plato from the very intellectual type of philosophic activity that rejects the manifold changing appearances, the things of this world, and searches for the changeless essences or forms. He did not however distinguish, as we do now, between methodology and metaphysics. A perfect dialectician was for Plato an inspired philosopher. Platonic dialectic seems to be vaguely reminiscent of Vātsyāyana's comment about the methodology of a *śāstra*, which says that it progresses through naming, defining or characterizing, and examining.[28]

Aristotle however cleared some mist that surrounded the notion of Platonic dialectic by transforming it into a technique that could be learnt by itself. Dialectic being such a technique becomes, according to both Aristotle and Plato, unrestricted in its application. But while for Plato it is essentially a scientific activity, for Aristotle its lack of restriction is an indication of its unscientific character.[29] Aristotle rejects the Platonic contention that dialectic involves search for

[26] Ibid., p. 83.
[27] W. K. & M. Kneale, p. 9.
[28] Vātsyāyana (Thakur's edn.), p. 181.
[29] J. D. G. Evans, p. 50.

definitions. For him it is the study of the technique of argument from non-evident premises. Thus Aristotle is believed to be covering also dialectical arguments when he was giving an account of syllogism. In the *Topics*, he gave rules for conducting debate (i.e. the disputatious debate by means of valid arguments). But in *De Sophisticus Elenchus* which is considered to be an appendix to the *Topics*, he gives rules for detecting (as well as inventing) invalid arguments and in this respect it resembles the *Vāda* manuals of the ancient Indians where the method of invention and detection of invalid arguments are discussed.

It has, however, been argued by J. D. G. Evans, against the prevailing opinion of modern commentators on Aristotle, that it is a mistake to represent the *Topics* as a manual of instruction on how to win a debate at all costs or even to regard it as a first draft of the *Analytics*.[30] The *Topics*, according to Evans, is *sui generis*, and here Aristotle elects to treat such concepts as intelligibility in their full complexity. I wish to leave the matter here. Having outlined the nature of philosophic activity in classical India as well as what counted as intelligible philosophic arguments and what constituted a rational philosophic discourse, I wish to proceed to my main topic. If anything definite has emerged from the above discussion, it is simply this: the intellectual climate in which philosophy developed in classical India was in relevant respects very similar to that prevalent in ancient Greece.

[30] Ibid., p. 94.



PART II

KNOWLEDGE AND ILLUSION



4
Knowledge as a Mental Episode

The word 'knowledge' is highly ambiguous.
B. RUSSELL

If you do know that here is one hand, we'll grant you all the rest.
L. WITTGENSTEIN

4.1 Doubting

Perception yields knowledge. For to perceive, in at least one acceptable sense of the verb, is to know. Sometimes this is well expressed in such commonplace sayings as 'Seeing is believing'. In fact we should be saying instead, 'seeing is knowing' for such a cliché is obviously about a person whose disbelief is removed by the *ultimate* evidence of the sense. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating' is another such common cliché. Sometimes even the converse seems to be true. When Theaetetus said to Socrates, 'The way it looks to me at the moment is that knowledge is nothing but perception' he was responding to very common intuition.[1] More generally, however, perception, in the sense of 'sensing', is regarded as an important source of knowledge. Or, to put it in the Indian terminology, it is a primary 'means' of knowing (*pramāṇa*), one of the main 'ways' of knowing. We cannot therefore get a clear idea of perception in the Indian context unless we are sure as to what counts as knowledge or a knowing event in traditional Indian philosophy. I shall now try to introduce the notion of a knowing event. This will lead me to discuss many issues related to the notion of a mental event, for a knowing event will be treated here as a species of mental event.

Our discussion in the previous chapter has shown that philosophical investigation starts from that unsatisfactory state of mind in which one feels a curious uncertainty regarding something. Vātsyāyana has described philosophical activity as something that is applied to objects, questions, problems, or purposes (the word '*artha*' is ambiguous enough to allow all these meanings) about which we are uncertain or

[1] Plato, *Theaetetus*, 151 e.

entertain a doubt. For if we already know the answers, philosophical activity ends; and if we do not have any idea about the question itself, philosophical activity cannot begin.[2] The example that is discussed in this connection is one of a vaguely viewed object (in darkness or at a distance), a vertically erect thing with some thickness, in the form of a dark blur. This initial dark blur is seen gradually more clearly, as one approaches near. One tends to form a 'dubious judgement' such as whether it is a man or a tree-stump.

The uncertainty referred to here is what Nyāya calls *saṃśaya*, which I propose to translate as 'doubt' or 'dubiety'. The Nyāya process is comparable to that of watching and gradually discovering an object approaching from a distance through thick fog. S. T. Coleridge has thus described the emergence of the phantom ship in *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*:

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist:
It moved and moved and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.[3]

The Sanskrit poet, Māgha, typifies, in *Śiśupālavadha*, a similar process in his rather ornamental description of the descent of Nārada on earth from the sky:

(1) People anxiously looked upwards and wondered: The light of the Sun's charioteer, Anuru, travels horizontally, (and) it is well known that fire blazes upwards; but what is this light that is descending downwards, glowing in all directions?
(2) The Lord (Kṛṣṇa) first took it to be a mass of light, then he ascertained it to be an embodied being with a particular shape; afterwards he saw him to be a man having limbs distinctly, and thus gradually he recognized him to be Nārada.[4]

Knowledge is often arrived at through a process of this kind, initiated by a doubt and sustained by inquiry. Doubt is the precursor of knowledge. There is, perhaps, little need to belabour this point. According to Nyāya doubt is not only the harbinger of knowledge or certainty (in the manner already described in Chapter 3.2), but it is also constituted by some knowledge in the minimal sense as one of its essential components: Our uncertainties, under such consideration,

[2] See note 6, ch. 3. [3] S. T. Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, p. 15.
[4] Māgha, Canto 1, verses 2 and 3.

would be based upon some certainties or other. We cannot be uncertain unless there is a subject for us to be uncertain *about*, and in this context we must be more or less certain about the existence (or possibility) of that subject (*dharmin*). It will be argued that one could very well be uncertain about the subject too. But we may do so only by switching our attention from one theme to another. Our uncertainty or doubt about the *subject* *X*, for example, would presuppose some other certainty—certainty about something else or some other fact in the background. In fact, uncertainty or dubiety gets formulated only in the background of some certainty of another kind. Hence to be able to doubt is to concede some minimal knowledge about something. We need some 'fixed' pegs, so to speak, to hang our doubts upon.

Nyāya tries to prove the point in question as follows. Suppose I doubt whether something *X*, a vaguely visible object for instance, is *A* or *B*, but I cannot be in this case in doubt about there being an *X*, a vaguely visible object. If I doubt, however, whether I am *seeing* *X* or not, I merely fall back upon another certainty, viz. that I am having, or have just had, a palpable mental occurrence which I am trying to interpret: it may be a *seeing* or a hallucination; I am not sure about its exact nature. In other words, there is a *central core* (cf. a *dharmin*) around which we weave our doubtful alternatives, *A* or *B*. But in the context of the doubt 'whether *X* is *A* or *B*', the central core cannot be held to be in doubt.

If this analysis of doubt can be shown to be relevant in the Cartesian tradition also, then one can argue that our search for rock-bottom certainty in the Cartesian manner should, in a sense, have ended even before it had begun, and that Descartes' *cogito* argument was unnecessarily prolonged! But this may be unfair. For we are trying to subject here Descartes and the Cartesian philosophers to a scrutiny, using a notion of doubt that was well entrenched only in the Indian Nyāya tradition. Descartes might have conceded this point while asking his readers to indulge in some hyperbolic *doubt*. In any case the point remains that doubting necessarily involves some knowing in the minimal sense, and that knowing in the non-minimal sense is what is achieved when the dubious alternatives (*A*, *B*, or *C*) are cancelled in favour of only one that is justified.

It is not that something like the above Nyāya-inspired critique of the Cartesian *cogito* argument has never arisen in the Cartesian context. The critique, for the sake of simplicity, may be roughly formulated like this: Our formulation of a doubt as 'it is doubtful whether *X* is *A* or *B*' entails 'it is certain that there is *X*'. Hence the philosophic programme

may be built upon this available certainty on each occasion of doubt and the resulting attempt to replace this partial certainty or partial knowledge by full-fledged certainty or more precise knowledge, such replacement being done on the basis of a theory of 'evidence'.

The controversy over the exact significance of the *cogito* argument is well known. It will certainly be out of place to recount it here. The Nyāya point that I am suggesting here is not, however, to establish the certainty of the existence of the thinking subject, or the self-verifiability of such sentences as 'I exist', but to reveal what we understand today as the 'existential presupposition' in logic. Any sentence of the form 'a is B' or '$B(a)$' presupposes 'a exists'. Hence the doubt-and-certainty argument depends upon such a logical implication as:

$$B(a) \supset (Ex)\ (x = a).$$

The general logical principle involved is that in order to have any property, even a dubious one, predicated of a subject, it is necessary for the subject to exist. Since, in the statement of doubts (formulable doubts) in the Nyāya sense, predicates (though dubious ones only) are attached to the subject-term, the subject-term must be non-empty, or what amounts to the same thing, the existence of the entity denoted by the subject-term must be a certainty. J. Hintikka argues that Descartes sometimes mistakenly thought that his *cogito* depended upon some indubitable logical principle of existential presupposition.[5] But obviously this interpretation of the *cogito* cannot be sustained, for such a logical principle has nothing to do with at least two elements that Descartes thought necessary for his *cogito* argument: (i) the connection between thinking and existence, and (ii) the use of the first person.[6]

I have already described that the end-product, or to use the modern computer terminology, the output of the Nyāya philosophic method is a decision or certainty (*nirṇaya*). The process is set in motion by doubt and ends in a decision. What is decided would be claimed to be knowledge at least by the investigator, if he is satisfied. The end-product takes the form of a mental episode called *pramā*, 'knowledge' (a knowledge-episode). It is such a cognitive episode (*jñāna*) as hits the mark! It is this 'truth-hitting' character of the episode that turns the cognitive episode into a knowledge-episode, a piece of knowledge.

This way of looking at things raises some obvious questions.

[5] J. Hintikka (1962a), p. 6.

[6] B. Williams, p. 92; also A. Kenny, p. 61.

Knowledge is usually understood by the philosophers of the Western tradition, and by ordinary people of any tradition, not as a momentary episode of the mind, but as a more stable, inter-subjectively communicable item. We do say that knowledge is treasure. We are said to *acquire* or *gain* knowledge. The *Gītā* and many other texts do talk about knowledge that *stays* with us, i.e. 'does not run away'. In the Western philosophical tradition since Plato (*Meno*) it has been customary to talk about knowledge as justified true belief. Writers of *pramāṇa-śāstra* were not unaware of this 'dispositional' character of knowledge, but in the context of developing their *pramāṇa-śāstra* they emphasized solely the 'episodic' character of emergent awareness.

4.2 *Knowledge and Belief: Disposition versus Episode*

Some terminological decision is unavoidable in the context. Since I am introducing a subject (enriched with a long historical tradition) in a language in which it never existed in this manner, I have to go into the banality of inquiring into the meaning of certain commonly used terms. A cognitive awareness includes in our sense of the term episodic verbal thoughts as well as 'non-verbal' (?) perceptual awareness. It can be either true or false. When it is true I would call it a piece of knowledge, or a knowledge-episode, and when false, only an awareness. Some have suggested at this point: why don't we use the commonly used English philosophical term 'belief' (to translate the Sanskrit *jñāna*)? For true and false beliefs will be parallel to the true and false awareness or cognition, and a true belief shares the same situation with knowledge as true awareness will in our terminology. However, this parallelism may be misleading.

'Belief', like the term 'knowledge' in Western epistemology, is hardly ever used to mean a mental episode, though it is regarded as a mental state initially connected more often than not with some such episode. John's belief that Santa Claus exists might have been acquired at the age of four from the stories told by his mother. Perhaps much earlier in my childhood, I had acquired a belief that the ground under my feet would not melt when I walked upon it, although I had hardly been 'conscious' about it. Beliefs can be discarded, confirmed, contradicted, and examined. A cognitive episode, because it is an episode, is momentary; but afterwards we can recall the episode, which will be, however, another episode, a memory-experience. We can confirm or contradict a cognitive episode only by referring to its thought-content that can be captured in language.

Beliefs usually stem from some actual cognitive episode, or are actualizable into some such episode. Can there be beliefs that have never been actualized or apprehended *consciously*? It would seem that there are such beliefs. For example, I may not have wondered or apprehended consciously until today that the floor will not melt under my feet, but still it seems that my action of walking has always assumed it. The soundness of this argument may be questioned, but in any case it has some plausibility, although such a belief, even when it is true, may not be a candidate for knowledge in the sense we are concerned with here. For it would be very odd to hold that somebody knows that the ground will not melt even though he has never actually been aware of this fact even for once in his life. I might, unconsciously, acquire some belief as the above argument shows, but to acquire knowledge, I argue, I must have a cognitive awareness, a mental episode, at least once in my life. Knowing does not mean, as some philosophers may argue, being in a special state of mind, but knowing seems to be always derived from some cognitive episode. A cognitive event is a necessary condition for knowing, though not a sufficient one.

I am aware that I am pleading for slightly different usages of two crucial terms, knowledge and belief. They are not ordinarily understood in the same way in Western philosophical writings. However, I believe that the sense that I recommend here for 'knowledge' or 'knowing' would, at least, be intelligible to the users of ordinary English, and would not seem entirely outlandish to Western philosophers. My job is doubly difficult. For one has first to reckon with the special philosophical meaning of certain Sanskrit terms (which are not obviously used in exactly the same sense in ordinary Sanskrit). One has then to search for the nearly equivalent expressions in English, some of which may already be loaded with various other senses in philosophical writings.

The verb 'to know' in English is used most commonly to signify a disposition. It is what G. Ryle has called a 'capacity' verb.[7] A. J. Ayer argues, however, that 'dispositions which are taken to constitute knowing must sometimes be actualized', and it is through this existence of a special mental state that these dispositions are actualized.[8] However, I have already said that I would try to connect knowing, not with any special state of mind, but with a particular inner episode or occurrence.

[7] G. Ryle (1949), pp.133–4. [8] A. J. Ayer (1956), p. 15.

Not every cognitive episode amounts to a knowledge episode (or knowledge in our sense), although it 'tries' to be one. In this respect, too, parallelism with belief is to be noted. When one acquires a belief (consciously at least) through some, presumably reliable, method, one necessarily assumes it to be true, for to *believe* something is to believe it to be true. Similarly when I cognize some thing or some fact, I have a general tendency to take this to be a piece of knowledge. The matter may be put in another way. A cognitive episode is like shooting at the bull's-eye. We take shots at the bull's-eye, some of them hit it, and others miss. But the general idea behind taking shots is to hit. A cognitive episode tries to hit at the *truth*. If it is successful, it becomes knowledge. It may fail, but the purpose of the enterprise is not to fail but to become a knowledge episode.

There seems to be a difference between the 'belief' view of knowledge and the 'episode' view of knowledge in that in the former the truth of the belief needs to be justified through some conscious reasons or in some other ways, whereas in the latter we need to pay attention to the 'causal' antecedents or the cluster of phenomena (mental or physical or both) that converge to bring about the cognitive episode. Since Plato's *Meno* (97c), the demand in the Western tradition has been that the truth of the belief must be linked up with a justification. In other words, the belief must not be true by chance, but the person acquiring it must use some reliable method appropriate for acquiring such a belief. To use Plato's language, true opinions or beliefs 'run away from a man's mind . . . until you tether them by working out the reason'.[9] One may say that it is not enough for one's belief to hit the truth, but it must be shown how it did. This Socratic 'tether' element in the constitution of the conception of knowledge has created a particular difficulty that has been prominent in contemporary Western epistemological discussion. A number of counter-examples can be cited following Edmund Gettier, whose influential article, 'Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?' has generated much modern discussion.[10] These are counter-examples where the truth of the belief and the use of the method for justification are detached from each other. One may use a reliable method and recognize a belief which is true, but the use of the method does not appropriately contribute to the truth of the belief.

The recent literature on this problem has been enormous, and the

[9] Plato, *Meno*, 98 a. [10] E. Gettier, in *Analysis*, 23 (1963).

original problem has become more and more entangled, so as to evoke a comment from R. Nozick: 'So messy did it all seem that I just stopped reading that literature.'[11] A belief, in order to be knowledge, must somehow be connected with the fact believed; without this connection we may have a true belief, but not knowledge. I may introduce an Indian example used by Candrakīrti in a slightly different context. Suppose *A* has stolen something, and the police have got the suspect. Now two persons, *B* and *C*, come along to testify. *B*, who does not *know*, tells, simply out of malicious intent, that he has *seen A* in the act. And *C*, who has actually seen *A* in the act, says the same thing. The content of the belief of the police or the judge in both cases would be the same. But if the judge inflicts punishment on the basis of *B*'s testimony rather than *C*'s, we would feel that something has gone wrong. Why? One tentative answer is that in the first case the punitive action was taken on the basis of a belief which happened to be *falsely derived*, while in the second the action was based upon knowledge. In other words, we must take into account the 'ways and means' through which a belief is derived apart from its being a true belief.

The *pramāṇa* theorist would say that the belief must be based upon a correct *pramāṇa*, a 'means' of knowing. In the above example, in both cases the general character of 'means' used is *śabda*, 'verbal testimony'. But in one case it is *pramāṇābhāsa* ('pseudo-means'), as Uddyotakara would say, while in the other it is a correct *pramāṇa* ('means').[12] Both a correct 'means' and a 'pseudo-means' share a general characteristic (*sāmānya-paricchedakatva*). Why is the first means in the above example a pseudo-means? For it does not *fulfil* the necessary conditions of a verbal testimony. The sentence uttered by a speaker would generate knowledge in an appropriate hearer, provided the speaker is an *āpta* (a trustworthy person). We have already given (see Chapter 1.3) Vātsyāyana's definition of an *āpta*. The later philosophers say that the qualified speaker should also have the following characteristics:

(1) He must not be mistaken himself (cf. *bhrama*)
(2) He has no intention to deceive (cf. *vipralipsā*)
(3) He is not confused, not intoxicated etc. (cf. *pramāda*)
(4) His sense faculties are in perfect order (cf. *karaṇāpāṭava*)

This list will qualify *C* and disqualify *B* as an *āpta* in Candrakīrti's example. A verbal testimony will be a pseudo-means to knowledge if

[11] R. Nozick, p. 169.

[12] Uddyotakara (B), p. 3.

the stated conditions are not met. Although Candrakīrti's philosophic motivation is very different, his example has a sceptical resonance and hence it is relevant as far as our scepticism about a knowledge-claim is concerned. In fact a remote similarity with Edmund Gettier's examples cannot be missed. What is wrong in such a sceptical case is that the truth of a belief (or an awareness) and the use of the 'means' or method are detached from each other. The usual demand of the *pramāṇa* doctrine is that they should not be detachable! We may learn a great deal about the exact nature of a knowledge episode or knowledge from such so-called sceptical examples. I shall discuss below certain examples of this kind cited by Śrīharṣa and the possible Nyāya response to them (see Chapter 4.11).

We may recognize that the verb 'to know' in ordinary speech (similarly the root *jñā* in Sanskrit) often means nothing more than 'is aware' or 'rightly believes'. Sanskrit philosophers, however, use a different term, one not related directly to *jñā*, to denote a concept that comes closer to the philosophical notion of knowledge: *pramā* consisting of the prefix *pra* indicating excellence, perfection, and the root *mā*, 'to measure', 'to know'. Literally, it should mean a perfect measure, a true cognitive awareness (recall Nāgārjuna's critique earlier in Chapter 1.4). *Pramāṇa* in this way means 'instrument' for knowing, i.e. the most relevant factor for bringing about the knowledge episode. In the episodic view of knowledge, therefore, the most relevant (causal) factor gets prominence (and is called *pramāṇa*). Inquiry into *pramāṇa*, thus becomes inquiry into the most reliable or standard *sources* of knowledge, perception, inference, authority, and the like. But, in fact, the ambiguity of the term *pramāṇa* allows it to be regarded as the term for evidence or criteria. In the term *pramāṇa*, the notion of 'cause' and 'because' merge into one. In my perceptual knowledge *that* this is a table, the most relevant causal factor is (I may choose) the visual faculty that I have, and the same faculty could be regarded as the evidence (the most reliable one) for my perceptual knowledge *that* this is a table. I know by inference that there is a fire in the next room, and my inference is 'caused' by my awareness of smoke coming out of the next room (*liṅga-parāmarśa*). Nevertheless, my evidence for knowing that there is a fire in the next room is also my awareness of the smoke coming out. *Pramāṇa* in this way is a 'causal' factor for the knowledge episode, as well as evidence, in fact the most reliable means, for the resulting knowledge episode. In the light of all these comments, it may be said that Indian philosophers viewed a world or constructed a world

of a series of cognitive events rather than collected a mass of true propositions. But in spite of this difference, some basic philosophical issues were parallel. Therefore, we recognize in the writings of Indian philosophers a different style in doing philosophy rather than doing a different philosophy.[13]

4.3 Praśastapāda on Mental Episodes

The *pramāṇa-śāstra* presupposes the Nyāya philosophical psychology of mental episodes. I shall now introduce some of the terms for different mental episodes. Praśastapāda, the Vaiśeṣika author, whose authority is well regarded also in the Nyāya school, lists six principal psychological or 'mental' occurrences that are episodic in character: cognition, pleasure, pain, will or desire or attraction (*pace* Descartes), repulsion, and effort to act.[14] Pleasure and pain are distinguished here from our awareness (cognition) of them. This was highly controversial, and the non-Nyāya philosophers (among them the Buddhist) never accepted this distinction. But the Naiyāyikas persisted in some tortuous sort of way, as we shall see later (Chapter 9). *Icchā* and *dveṣa*, which I have translated here as a 'will/attraction' and 'repulsion' are not easily translatable, 'Desire', 'will', 'wish'—all these words I find to be inadequate in some respect or other. These two concepts are regarded in Praśastapāda's description as opposites. One is roughly defined as the mental 'attraction' towards an intended object, while the other is 'repulsion' from it. Obviously they mean much else besides. *Icchā* will range from the will to act and the most ardent and intense desire to the weakest wish or inclination, and *dveṣa* would mean the same thing only in the negative or opposite way. However, I shall often translate *icchā* as 'desire', or as 'will', provided what I have said about these words is borne in mind. It is claimed that desires arising in us as episodes make us inclined to act one way or other. And *dveṣa*, the opposite of desire (*icchā*), does the same thing. Both desire and its opposite may lead to what is called *kṛti* or *yatna*, 'effort' that leads us in its turn to act.[15]

Of the six in the list, cognition or cognitive awareness is considered the most fundamental in the sense that it may sometimes lead to other

[13] One may be reminded here of A. Goldman's 'causal' theory of knowing. An important direction for research would be to analyse the Nyāya theory and to show what relevance, if any, it might have to Goldman's theory. It may simply be a study in contrasts.

[14] Praśastapāda (*Vyomavatī*), p. 361.

[15] Ibid., pp. 625–8.

episodes as a 'chain reaction'. For example, awareness of an object (a jewel or a snake) coupled with a further awareness that this is what I want or do not want (*iṣṭasādhanatā-jñāna* or *dviṣṭasādhanatā-jñāna*), leads to desire which, in turn, leads to effort, and from effort follows action. This is the simplified Nyāya picture of the interconnection between one mental episode and another. This is also how Nyāya manages to talk about the object that is *referred to* by these mental episodes. Besides pleasure and pain, all the other mental episodes have objective references, that is to say, are directed towards some object. Pleasure and pain may be (causally or otherwise) connected with some object, but they themselves are 'passive' feelings and lack the character of referring to anything beyond themselves. The primary mark of a cognitive awareness is that it is always an awareness *of* something. A blank awareness is an impossibility (for controversy here, see below). To be an object of awareness in this sense does not mean that it should be real or it should exist. For the awareness may be an imagination, a doubt guessing, wilful fantasizing, dreaming, non-veridical perception or a veridical one. Whatever may be the status of the object of awareness, that object may be transmitted to the resulting desire, etc., and in this way desire, etc. get 'fixed' with an object. Gadādhara puts this matter figuratively: desire, etc. get their 'objects' by begging; the 'object-laden' cognition is the one from which they have to beg.[16] This account of the ancient philosophers raises two very important issues discussed in modern philosophy: the problem of intentionality, and the problem of psychologism. I shall deal with them in sections 4.5 and 4.7. First I shall discuss in some detail the nature and implication of the doctrine that regards knowledge and cognition as episodic in character.

4.4 *Knowing as an Episode*

I have suggested that we translate the Sanskrit term *pramā* as 'knowledge' or 'knowing'. Philosophical problems concerning the notion of knowledge are well known in the Western tradition. Hence by translating *pramā* as 'knowledge' we may be adding more to the existing confusion about Indian philosophy than resolving any. Yet it seems to me that no other English verb but 'to know' comes closer in meaning. In any case, part of my attempt in these pages is to make the notion of *pramā* and *pramāṇa* intelligible. Besides, I have already

[16] This is usually called *yācita-maṇḍana-nyāya*. See B. K. Matilal (1968), p. 8n.

shown that a lot of what is said about knowledge and scepticism in the Western tradition has parallels in the Indian discussions of *pramāṇa-śāstra* (Chapters 1 and 2). Hence the translation, I think, is justified. If we can note some salient features of the notion of 'knowing' in Indian philosophical tradition to contrast them with the notion of knowledge in the West, I think that our chances of misunderstanding will be minimized.

The episodic notion of knowledge is not wholly unfamiliar even in the Western tradition. It seems to have been presupposed when Plato in his *Theaetetus* let Theaetetus define knowledge as 'perception'. Socrates immediately connected this definition of knowledge with the doctrine of Protagoras that says that 'a man is the measure of all things', and that 'things are, for each person, the way he perceives them'.[17] If the Protagorean doctrine is properly amplified, it leads to an extreme form of phenomenalism, which rejects both naïve realism and representationalism. This position, then, comes very close to the Yogācāra idealism of Buddhism, which I have discussed elsewhere.[18] This consequence seems to be true in spite of the difference, as underlined by J. McDowell, between the line of thinking of the sense-datum theorists and that of Protagoras.[19]

If broadly similar, but basically different, philosophical positions are observed to give rise to similar or even the same consequences, at different periods of history and in different cultures, then reflecting upon how such conclusions were reached we can gain, I think, a deeper understanding of the philosophical issues that are apparently at variance. If one adheres to a broadly stated phenomenalistic position (viz. things are exactly as they seem to be, neither more nor less), then the concept of an 'enduring subject' becomes a problem and may be shown to be a logical fiction. As David Hume wrote:

> For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception.[20]

The Buddhist phenomenalist rejected the concept of an 'enduring subject' from the beginning, and by the seventh century AD, we have, as its philosophic consequence, a fully developed and most persuasive philosophic argument in favour of the 'universal flux' doctrine. It is a

[17] Plato, *Theaetetus*, 152 c.
[18] B. K. Matilal (1974a).
[19] J. McDowell, pp. 119 f.
[20] David Hume, *Treatise* I. iv. IV.

pleasant surprise to note that McDowell has argued that the 'secret doctrine' that Socrates ascribed to Protagoras implies the doctrine of 'becoming' as opposed to 'being', and perhaps, from similar considerations, develops into a 'flux doctrine'.[21] As the Jaina philosophers, the great synthesizers of India, say: If one starts with the 'being' point of view, one reaches an unchanging, immutable reality, witness Advaita Vedānta. And if one starts with the 'becoming' point of view, one reaches the doctrine of universal flux as the truth.[22]

The notion of knowing as an episode can be further illuminated by referring to P. T. Geach (1957) who develops a theory of mental acts in general and acts of judgement (or verbal thoughts) in particular. The 'inner' occurrence which I am referring to as a cognitive event would invite problems for some rival philosophies of mind. The expression 'inner' is already metaphorical. (Russell once asserted that people's thoughts are in their heads.) It is customary to refer to mental and physical events as 'inner' and 'outer' occurrences. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, however, treats both 'inner' and 'outer' occurrences as 'effects' (*kārya*) and tries to bring them under a general theory of 'cause' and 'effect'. The idea is probably that what happens *inside* follows the model of what happens *outside*. Therefore, the (philosophic) explanation of what happens inside could be intelligible when given in terms of the categories used to explain what happens outside. I shall later come back to the problem of 'causal explanation' of the 'inner', as well as the overrated problem of psychologism that it leads to (see 4.7).

What we call sensation or sensory awareness and what we call proper perceptions, are episodic in character. This needs no further proof, for their episodic nature is generally acceptable. The episodic nature of verbal or verbalizable thoughts also seems to be beyond dispute. What is in dispute, however, or would be in dispute, is whether these episodes, as Nyāya seems to claim, amount to knowledge or events of knowing. For then as soon as the moment is over and the event is gone, our knowledge would be gone forever! It will be argued that we do not seem to lose our 'knowledge' as soon as the perceptual event is over. One may once again refer to Plato's *Meno* where Socrates points out that the superiority of knowledge lies in the fact that it will not run away. There is a very simple answer from the

[21] J. McDowell, pp. 121–2.

[22] The fully-fledged argument for the Buddhist flux doctrine is to be found in Dharmakīrti's *Hetubindu*. Siddhasena Divākara, *Sanmatitarka*, ch. 3, verse 48. See also B. K. Matilal (1981), pp. 32–4.

Nyāya viewpoint to this rather simple point. It is a matter of terminology only. When I cease to perceive the car accident that happened just now, I do not lose everything. I retain my memory, and hence, later on before a judge I can say under oath that I have 'knowledge' of that accident because I was an eye-witness. What is retained after the experience in my 'inner' bank in the form of a memory-impression, can be called 'knowledge', provided it is undistorted, unfaded, and vivid. For, it is there ready to be recalled at any time to give us another 'inner' episode resembling the former. In this way, we can say with Nyāya that proper veridical perceptions always deliver 'knowledge'. A knowing episode is the culmination or end-product of a perceptual process.

Philosophers debated over the question whether 'sensations' (as episodes) are cognitive in character or not. Russell, in developing his neutral monism argued that if the 'subject' can be shown (as he by then believed it could) to be 'a logical fiction', then we cannot any more maintain a pure sensation to be cognitive, for sensation would then be what has to do partly with physics (a patch of colour) and partly with physiology.[23] Russell claimed that this was the unavoidable consequence for dispensing with the *subject* as 'one of the actual ingredients of the world'. I have already referred to one of the consequences of the Buddhist rejection of the enduring subject as a fundamental term. In this way, it seems that a follower of the Buddhist Diṅnāga school would welcome the Russellian conclusion that the subject is a logical fiction, although his philosophical motivation would be very different from that of Russell. But even allowing for such a difference in motivation, one cannot fail to note that powerful philosophical arguments are developed in detail in the Buddhist tradition to show that the conception of the self is a logical fiction. The general patterns of philosophical arguments do coincide to a large extent, even if the motivations are different.

Pure sensations in the Diṅnāga school are claimed to be cognitive in character *pace* Russell. A follower of the Diṅnāga school would argue that unless a sensation is also a cognition we would not be able to grasp it (or its image) by remembrance. Russell seems to concede this point by saying that pure sensation is the cause of cognitions partly by correlation and partly by giving rise to images and memories 'after the sensation is faded'. Russell's neutral monism seeks to eliminate the

[23] B. Russell (1959), p. 103.

difference between mind and matter as merely one of arrangement. (Russell admits that he was led into this line of thinking through the influence of William James.) It could be said without risk of injustice that Russell would be inclined (in spite of the qualifying term 'neutral') to eliminate mind in favour of matter rather than the other way round. A sensation, in Russell's account of this time, becomes part of a mind being grasped with other occurrences in a memory-chain, and part of the physical world being grasped with its causal antecedents. This is admittedly a very simplified picture, but it makes the philosophic point I am interested in demonstrating. Russell's account of sensation, in his neutral monistic phase, tends to break down as we face the problems of perception and knowledge. He introduced the notion of 'noticing' as an undefined term (in 1940) to resolve some of these problems. This was no doubt an interesting development, but we will have occasion to see in the next chapter whether the problems of perception could have other resolutions.

Diṅnāga's notion of sensation (or sensory awareness) is cognitive, because it involves self-awareness (*sva-saṃvedana*). This will also be discussed in the next chapter. It is, however, not clear whether this type of self-awareness is in any way similar to 'noticing' in the Russellian sense. For Diṅnāga a sensory awareness may be self-aware but it cannot be verbalized (Chapter 10).

While a Russellian may be inclined to dismiss the mind in favour of the physical if a choice has to be made, a Buddhist would perhaps be inclined to do the reverse. It should be noted, however, that a follower of Diṅnāga maintains only provisionally a sort of dualism between *viṣaya* and *vijñāna*, between the sensibilia and the sensory awareness: the visual awareness corresponds to the visual object or *rūpa* (colour and shapes) and so on. But this dualism is not an uncompromising sort of dualism. In other words, it is not similar to Cartesian dualism where the two domains, the mental and the material, are sharply distinguished. How the sensibilia are connected with the sensory awareness, however, raises many intricate issues. There is a rich literature on these issues, a literature that records the sharp controversy over them between the Sautrāntika and the Yogācāra Buddhists. This also shows that the ultimate religious motivation was not an important factor for such philosophical differences. The classical Indian thinkers were, I dare to suggest, genuinely interested in the philosophical problems much in the way we are interested in them today. The Buddhist dissolved the fiction of a self, but replaced it by a series of discrete

cognitive occurrences either running parallel to a series of non-cognitive (physical? phenomenal?) factors or surmounting such a series. There is admittedly a sort of correlation between the object-series and the awareness-series or sensation-series, but what sort of correlation it would be is not easily settled. Apart from the sensational core of a particular perceptual experience, what gives it the required 'accretion' to make it cognitive is not, according to Diṅnāga, always a past history (as some philosophers would have it, perhaps), but it is what Diṅnāga calls 'self-awareness' (*sva-saṃvitti*). Diṅnāga thinks this self-awareness to be a necessary component of any sensation or awareness.

4.5 *Mental Acts versus Mental Episodes*

Geach has argued that there are such things as what he calls 'mental acts' or they may be called 'mental events' or 'what happens in a person's mind'. These are, according to him, plainly episodic—'have a position in a time-series'. It is contended that people have a 'private' mental life, and only the extreme behaviourists (and those philosophers who find any talk about 'mentalism', 'meaning', or 'intentions' suspicious) would deny this plain fact. When I see suddenly while I am writing that the ink has run out and I wish to find the ink-pot, or another pen, there happen at least two mental events according to the Nyāya count: my awareness that the ink has run out, and my wishing to have a refill. Geach refers to the Gospel story to make an identical point. Something happened to St Peter when the cock crew; he heard the noise, and remembered Christ's prophecy of his three denials, and in this way there were two mental acts or events that happened to St Peter.[24]

I prefer the term 'event' or 'episode'. The theory that I shall defend is not one of mental *act*, but one of mental episode. For acting, or *kriyā*, in ordinary language is ambiguous. It is, I think, primarily applied to physical movement and observable physiological behaviour. To use it for what happens in a person's so-called 'inner' world (assuming that such a world exists) is to indulge in a metaphor. The same criticism of taking a metaphor for a model may be applied against the phenomenological (Husserlian) use of 'acts' which are directed towards objects called *noema*. Of course, this metaphor is a dead metaphor now because of our familiarity with it through widespread usage. Each acting in the sense of observable physiological behaviour may be

[24] P. T. Geach, p. 2.

invariably (and immediately) preceded by some event or events (or happenings) in the 'inner' world, which for simplicity's sake, let us call the mind. Figuratively, we can say a 'mental' kick is needed to set the 'physical' ball in motion. According to the Nyāya scheme, this mental kick is called the (mental) 'effort' (*kṛti*) which is propelled by a will (*icchā*), that may initially owe its origin to some sort of awareness (see section 4.3). Therefore, for Nyāya, there are three events (or acts, if you like) taking place in the 'inner' world before a physical act originates in the 'outer'. G. Ryle, while deprecating these 'inner' events as 'occult episodes', allowed, unintentionally perhaps, that they were more episodic in nature than act-like.

Another obvious reason for thinking that the mind *acts* is our understanding of action in relation to the ordinary grammar of verbs. Verbs are usually defined as denotative of acts. (In Sanskrit, the same term '*kriyā*' is used more often for both, the grammatical category, verb, and the ontological category, movement.) Since 'see', 'think', 'hope', 'doubt', or 'remember' (all good specimens of our mental episodes) are all verbs, we tend to think of them as denotative of 'acts'. The idea of an act carries with it some other implications. Most of the time an act needs an 'object' to act upon (cf. transitive verbs), and perhaps, always, an actor or agent. The actor is supposed to be a substance, primarily a conscious or animate body, but by extension it may also be any inanimate body. If we transfer this entire model from the physical to the 'inner', then demands on our imagination would be greater. The notion of 'episode' does not, I argue, make such demands, or rather its demands are minimal. Thus, each verb in the above list of Praśastapāda may be denotative of mental episodes, but an episode would not necessarily be an 'acting'. Each episode may be treated as an 'effect' (*kārya*) and we can imagine causal factors leading to that effect. (Jayanta has argued, albeit somewhat differently, that all verbs need not be action-verbs.)[25] When I see an event called a 'car accident', it is natural for me to talk about its causal factors, or the process that led to it. (Physicalists are therefore rightly suspicious of the notion of 'event' or 'episode'.) Thus when I think that the cat next door is meowing, I do not perform an act, not even a mental act, but something happens within me—an event of my thinking what I think: 'the cat next door is meowing'.

[25] Jayanta, p. 19.

4.6 *Intentionality*

In the history of Western philosophy, 'act', 'content', and 'object' have been traditionally bound up with controversy regarding, among other things, the ontological status of 'object' or 'content' of such mental acts as that of desiring and hoping. I may wish for a unicorn to come along my way, but to ride one I need a real unicorn (which is usually not a possibility I may look forward to). Hence the usual retort: the object of desire is not an actual *object*.[26] What ontological status should we give to the *objects* of mental acts? F. Brentano, in answer to this question, formulated his doctrine of 'intensional inexistence'. All mental acts, according to Brentano, are *directed towards* some object or other, and this object intentionally 'inexists' in his terminology. Brentano was probably trying to hedge the issue, for it was not clear whether 'inexistence' meant a mental existence or a sort of neutrality to existence or non-existence. The issue is, however, philosophically profound, and I will have occasion to discuss later a number of Indian (classical) views regarding the ontological status of the *object* in a perceptual illusion (Chapter 6). These views, as we shall see, range from taking the 'object' to be definitely existent (Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā) to being part of the mental episode (the Buddhist), and finally to being decidedly non-existent (*Asat-khyātivāda*) or to being neither (Advaita Vedānta). (One may ask: was Brentano unconsciously siding with the Vedāntin? This seems to be a strange question, but a distant resonance is there in the notion of 'inexistence'. However, Brentano later on rejected this view.)

Brentano was rightly criticized by Husserl for wavering between taking the object as having a mental existence and taking it to be an entity that may be either existent or non-existent. For, as J. N. Mohanty insists in his exposition of Husserl, we 'need a theory that would be equally well applicable to thinking about the moon and to thinking about dragons'.[27] Husserl's theory of *noema* was such a theory, according to Mohanty, for here each mental act is said to have a 'correlative' *noema* or *sense*. This apparently means that when the act takes place it is immaterial whether the object intended by it exists or not, and such an object is presented in the act intending it in a certain manner, as having certain features, under a certain description, as *such-and-such*. Modern analytical philosophers (e.g. J. Searle) would

[26] F. Brentano in R. Chisholm (1961 edn.). This is part of what Chisholm calls the Brentano thesis.

[27] J. N. Mohanty (1981), p. 709.

relate the problem to Frege's notion of *Sinn*, for the parallelism is unmistakable. The *Sinn* or sense of a linguistic expression (with which Frege was primarily concerned) makes it possible for the expression to refer to some object, just as the *noema* of an act makes it possible that the act be directed to this particular object rather than to another. Mohanty, however, thinks that a Husserlian reading of Frege is more natural and proper than a Fregian reading of Husserl. In either case, however, we are left with the problem of intentionality.

Geach, in order to avoid, or rather bypass, the controversy over the notion of intentional object, proposes to abandon the talk of 'object' altogether and speaks instead of 'object-expression' in developing his theory of mental acts. He says that most psychological verbs require a grammatical object—a noun, a noun-phrase, or a noun-clause—to complete the sense, and it would be more fruitful, he says, to ask what is the logical role of these object-expressions. If, as I am arguing, the psychological verbs are regarded as denotative of psychological episodes rather than acts, then it would seem to be more plausible initially to bypass the issue of the status of the objects of mental acts as distinct from the acts themselves. We can pay attention rather to the causal antecedents of the event. The events, of course, have a structure, a pattern, and also a way of happening, but such a structure need not be considered distinct from the structured. By proposing to treat mental acts as events rather than acts, I think I can avoid at the outset the question of the ontological status of the (intended) object of mental acts, which the 'act-object' model of analysis presupposes. But the question is a more difficult one, and would come up in other forms in other contexts.

It seems to me that Nyāya and Buddhism while holding two almost diametrically opposite views regarding ontological matters, would agree in considering cases of cognitive awareness (or other mental acts) as episodes (inner episodes with (causal) antecedents). (Even the *Sāṃkhya* or *Vedānta* metaphysics would, I believe, be compatible with this episodic interpretation of knowledge or knowing, for what they call a *vṛtti* has unmistakably the character of being an event.) Incidentally, the act–object–agent model for analysing a cognitive event may seem to be compatible with the Nyāya way of looking at things. For the Buddhist, however, this would be a metaphor only to be explained away through philosophical analysis. The fact is that the metaphor of 'acting' is inlaid with the notion of doing, movement, do-er, object, etc., and hence seems inadequate or unsatisfactory for the happening

in the rather intangible 'inner' world. Here it may be noted also that the Sanskrit grammatical tradition extends the metaphor of movement to mental events such as knowing, cognizing, being certain, etc. The root '*gam*' means primarily to go, but when it is suitably prefixed, it means knowing ('*ava-gam*', '*adhi-gam*', etc.).

The act–agent model can in fact be subjected to a stricter analysis under which it will dissolve into episodic constituents. If an act or action is taken to be, as it often is, the meaning of some verb or verbal root, then it is only an abstraction, or as Bhartṛhari has repeatedly noted, a construction of several indistinguishable instantaneous changes in the state of things under one concept such as going or cooking. Each of such instantaneous changes can be seen as an individual episode or a clockable occurrence. Hence, cooking by Devadatta, it is argued, is nothing but a series of several (continuous) episodic rearrangements of the state of affairs which includes Devadatta himself as well as the cooked rice.[28] Similarly, Devadatta's knowing or perceiving of the tree, sensing of blue, awareness of some fact—all can be simply individual events, perhaps single ones, causally conditioned by particular state of affairs in each case. The non-physical event is causally induced as much as the physical one. But obviously the causal analysis of the former is more intractable (and, some would say, more indeterminate) than that of the latter.

We should note that the notion of agency for an act is rendered somewhat inessential in the above way of looking at acts. It becomes part of the postulate that posits acts as only conceptual tying-ups of discrete instantaneous events. Alternatively, the agent is posited (as it is in Nyāya) as what provides the *substratum* for the mental episodes to happen, and thereby can claim ownership of them. As far as the Buddhists are concerned, there is no *a priori* reason for us to believe that there must be such a substratum, a real one, for the events to take place in. A cognition may arise and disappear in the usual way in the awareness-continuum.

A mental episode in general (or a cognitive episode in particular) is an unrepeatable, datable, episode, as all events are. But an essential constituent of a cognitive episode—and in this it differs from a physical episode like a car accident—is that the psychological verbs referring to such episodes create *non-extensional* contexts. Broadly it is said that a mental phenomenon is distinguished from a physical one by virtue of

[28] Bhartrhari, III, sec. 8, verse 4.

its being characterized by what Brentano called intentionality. R. Chisholm has shown that this intentionality of the mental is ineliminable and hence non-extensional contexts are unavoidable in our talk of some key psychological verbs.[29] Thus, 'He knows, learns from his teacher, that Rāma kills Rāvaṇa' is not equivalent to, 'He knows that the husband of Sītā killed Rāvaṇa', for it is possible for one to be true while the other is false. Translated in our terminology, the two mental events are non-identical not only because they are two unrepeatable, clockable occurrences (of which, let us say, one has actually taken place while the other has not, for that would be the meaning of 'falsity' in this context), but also because they have different (distinguishable) 'intentional' structure. Part of this difference is revealed, according to Nyāya, by the verbalized forms (linguistic expressions) used ('Rāma' in the former and 'the husband of Sītā' in the latter). We thus come round to Geach's manoeuvre (see above) from talk about 'objects' to talk about 'object-expressions'.[30]

It is implicit in the theory that is being outlined here that two cognitive episodes may be distinct as two individual clockable occurrences and yet if they can have isomorphic 'intentional' structure they can be treated as equivalent for some relevant and practical purposes. For example, let e_1, e_2, and e_3 be three cognitive episodes:

e_1 = knowing that Rāma killed Rāvaṇa
e_2 = knowing that Rāma was the husband of Sītā
e_3 = knowing that the husband of Sītā killed Rāvaṇa.

Now if e_1 and e_2 arise in a subject in succession (the particular order of arising does not matter) or even simultaneously (*samūhālambana*), e_3 will arise in the same subject afterwards, although e_1 and e_3 will still be distinct not only as episodes but also as not being isomorphic as regards their 'intentional' structure. Further it is maintained that the same logical relationship equally holds among another set of (mental) events that have identical intentional structures but arise together in another subject (person) at another time. In other words, just as e_1 and e_2 are here followed by e_3 in one person at a given time, they can be followed by a similar e_3 in any person at any time. Thus it is that in the background of an event-ontology of the mental, certain causal and/or logical relationships and interconnections are established (following the model of physical-event causation) among different mental

[29] R. Chisholm (1957), pp. 168–85. [30] P. T. Geach, p. 1.

episodes as well as (when the occasion demands) between a mental episode and a physical one! (See 4.8 below.)

4.7 *Psychologism and Logical Theories*

A cognitive episode or an awareness is a temporally individuated particular episode, and it is, as it has been said by many philosophers, 'incurably private' to each cognizer. This raises two important questions. First, by talking about such unique mental events, are we not going backward in history by relapsing into the 'notorious' philosophical (or speculative) psychology so prevalent in the days of British empiricism and post-Kantian idealism? A question like this would seem to come from a modern philosopher such as M. Dummett, who repeatedly reminds us of Frege's strong attack on what he called 'psychologism'.[31] The second question can be put in a proto-Husserlian form. If objectivity of knowledge is denied in favour of the subjective mental occurrences of the above kind, then since the 'given' or the datum would remain in this way immanent in 'psychological temporality' or psychological episode, how could we even start any intelligible and communicable discourse about knowledge and perception? Since the two questions are related, I will attempt only one general *prima facie* answer here before proceeding any farther.

Most cognitive episodes are *verbal* thoughts in the sense that they are verbalizable, though not always verbalized, in some way or other. Bhartṛhari, the fifth-century grammarian-philosopher of India, propounded the thesis that verbalizability (or even verbal activity at an implicit level) is immanent in our cognitive faculty.[32] In fact, it is claimed that the cognitive faculty operates necessarily with the verbal. This does not mean that we always make audible noise with our vocal chord whenever we cognize, think, or perceive anything. Nor is it proper to say that we make 'inaudible' noise. On the other hand, it implies that we verbalize at some *deeper* level as we cognize and we cognize as we verbalize. In the light of this thesis, it is proper to claim that a so-called private and subjective cognitive event is equivalent to the occurrence of a verbal thought, and if a thought is verbalized, that is, expressed in a language, it breaks through the 'privacy' enclosure and becomes public property that is inter-subjectively available. The strong form of the Bhartṛhari thesis, however, was debatable:

B1 All cognitive episodes are equivalent to verbal thoughts.

[31] M. Dummett (1978), pp. 442–3.

[32] Bhartṛhari, I, verses 123–4.

It is even doubtful whether Bhartṛhari intended it in this form. A weaker form of the thesis would allow for certain non-verbal, primitive cognitive episodes among which one may put pure sensory awareness, 'raw feels', etc. We will come back to this problem later. (Chapter 10.)

The weaker form of the thesis is:

> B2 Most cognitive episodes can be treated as occurrences of verbal thoughts at some implicit level.

This weaker form was tacitly accepted by other Indian philosophers, and accordingly whenever they talked about an articulate cognitive mental episode, they referred to it by means of the corresponding verbal thought, and in this way the problem of subjectivity or privacy was avoided.

It may be useful in this connection to refer to Bernard Williams's helpful contrast between two different paradigms of privacy with regard to the mental. One is the 'pain' case where there is a marked difference between having the sensation (pain) oneself and thinking about someone else's having it. The other is the case of episodic 'verbalizable' thought. Here, according to Williams, the contrast between having the thought and thinking about someone else's having it is 'less dramatic, and can vanish'. In the Nyāya way of looking at things, the contrast does not exist, and thinking, speaking, hearing, and understanding can be entirely homogeneous in their content with some verbal thought or other. In other words, if the first case is 'incurably' private, the second is a 'curable' one. As Williams remarks, 'episodic thought which is totally verbal is nevertheless the nearest thing in the inner life to public thought'.[33]

Indian philosophers and logicians do not operate with the notion of a proposition, which is so well entrenched in the Western tradition. Let me explain: each cognitive episode, unique as it may be as an event, has a *structure* which gets expressed in a linguistic utterance, and by virtue of that structure it differs from another cognitive event. But the structure may coincide in totality with that of any other cognitive event, or events, taking place in the same person or in different persons at the same time or at different times, in which case all these cognitive events will be structurally indistinguishable except by virtue of their temporality or by their occurrence in a different person or by both. All structurally indistinguishable cognitive events are treated by the Indian

[33] B. Williams, pp. 85 and 298.

philosophers as one in so far as their logical properties as well as philosophical analyses are concerned. If my present cognitive episode has the structure expressible or verbalizable as 'The moon is made of green cheese' or 'The earth is round' then thousands of other cognitive events, past or future, belonging to different persons, but having the materially identical structure would be treated as one for the purpose of philosophical and logical analysis. The cognitive events, even when they are viewed and identified in this way, do not become propositions. The structural content is the minimal abstraction that is proposed here. The practice of the Indian philosophers is to refer to the cognitive events (structurally abstracted, but still treated as particular events) by the identical linguistic expressions in which they are verbalized. It is customary in the Western tradition to call the objects of epistemological attitudes ('believes' etc.) 'propositions' and, as we know, their nature has been a considerable source of bafflement. The best explanation available today is that they are to be regarded as possible states of affairs. But this already involves minimal abstraction. The Nyāya notion of a structural content seems to be even less peculiar where a set of particular cognitive events having identical structural content is held as identical in the context of any logical or causal operation. Temporally distinct and variously occurrent events are treated as though they are the same, and this *one event* thus individuated seems to be concrete (or no more abstract) than a temporally individuated mental occurrence.

This particular point about cognitive episodes can easily be misunderstood.[34] It may be puzzling to deal with and analyse cognitive episodes that are uniquely particular occurrents. Indian 'logic' is said to be concerned with the logical relation among such unique events. How would logic acquire the required generality it must have if it concerns itself not with propositions or statements and their logical relations, but with the private 'inner' affairs of a person? This is at least one formulation of the charge of psychologism against Indian logic in general. (J. M. Bochenski once made this charge in a conference discussion after the presentation of a paper by the present author.) Frege and Husserl, as we all know, launched a strong attack on this psychologistic tendency of the philosophers of logic. Frege, as M.

[34] For such confusion and criticism based upon misunderstanding, see L. C. Mullatti, pp. 16 f. It must however be admitted that the said Nyāya device does not totally resolve the problems connected with indexical expressions. It is difficult to explain in this way the identity of 'first-person' or 'present-tense' thoughts.

Dummett insists, changed the whole conception of philosophy by establishing, first, that the goal of philosophy is the analysis of the structure of what he called *thought*, second, that the study of *thought* is to be sharply distinguished from the study of the psychological process of *thinking* and, finally, that the only proper method for analysing thought consists in the analysis of language.[35] Assuming all these to be true, I say that Nyāya talk of the cognitive episodes in the above manner is somewhat akin to this given formulation of Frege's view. For it *did* distinguish between cognitive episodes having different intentional structures, such structures being distinguished, in turn, from the mental processes of thinking, and whatever private content of the mind that is incommunicable. The demand, in Nyāya, for identity of the intentional structure is more rigorous than the demand for identity of thought in Frege. The two sentences, 'the cat is on the mat' and 'the mat is under the cat' may express the same thought, but not the same episode in the Nyāya sense. For if the two episodes are to be treated as one, the verbalized forms of their intentional structures must be the same. Thus, by insisting upon the verbalizability condition, they also concentrated upon that part of the mental episode that is wholly communicable. To avoid psychologism, a Fregean cannot, I think, demand any more. (Whether the type of psychologism that Frege was repudiating was, as Dummett claims, 'deeply embedded in British empiricism as in post-Kantian idealism', remains, however, an open question and it is not my purpose to enter into it here.)[36]

Husserl's resolution of the pscyhologistic problems posed by his contemporaries was, however, entirely different. The problem, I think, for both Frege and Husserl was this: the justification of logical laws such as the law of contradiction cannot come from empirical psychology. This was one of the dangers of extreme empiricism. It may be that empiricism was moving, or already had moved in that direction, which, therefore, evoked the right reaction from Husserl and Frege, viz. repudiation of the claim of psychological justification of logical laws. Husserl, if I understand Mohanty's interpretation correctly, repudiated empirical psychology; but later he came round to appeal to what he called 'transcendental phenomenology' for supplying a justification of logical laws. In *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* he writes: 'Nothing, however, seems plainer than that the laws of 'pure logic' all

[35] See G. Frege's very illuminating article 'The Thought: Logical Inquiry', in P. F. Strawson (1967).

[36] M. Dummett (1978), p. 88.

have *a priori* validity. They are established and justified, not by induction, but by apodeictic inner evidence. Insight justifies no mere probabilities of their holding, but their holding or truth itself.'[37] Part of 'transcendental phenomenology' was, however, a sort of eidetic psychology. Even this 'apodeictic inner evidence' may be covert psychologism. Frege, however, chose to talk in terms of what he called *thought* and gave it a realistic interpretation. He rejected at least three theses as being the intrusion of psychology into logic: (a) logic should faithfully record our actual thought processes; (b) the meaning of an expression is the idea that it arouses in us, and (c) numbers are mental entities.

Against (a), Frege's strong point was that truth is independent of human judgement, and logical truths must be so. Against (b) he developed the idea of *Sinne*, which are, by Frege's own characterization, timeless entities, (c) is not relevant for our purpose. The *sense* (*Sinn*) is what one grasps when one understands an expression; it also contains 'the mode of presentation' of the object referred to. It is also said to be the 'cognitive content'. Recently Tyler Burge has come out strongly in favour of this 'cognitive content' interpretation of Frege's *Sinn*.[38] This seems vaguely similar to the 'structural content' (cf. *viṣayatā*) doctrine of the Naiyāyikas.

The dispute between psychologism and logicism can, however, be overstressed and overinflated. There are several ways by which a theory can avoid what is objectionable in psychologizing logic. Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya suggests that the Naiyāyika avoids the fault of pscyhologism by being an 'uncompromising realist'.[39] A cognitive event 'grasps' a fact as its objective counterpart, and hence the sentence that expresses the event, expresses not so much the *content* of the awareness as it does the fact that is both causally responsible for, and grasped by, the event. Let us say, e_1 is expressed by:

The cat is on the mat.

The sentence also describes the fact that is part of the objective reality. Through emphasis upon the fact-hood of what is captured by the cognitive event, one can bypass the issues of psychologism and subjectivity.

[37] E. Husserl, p. 21. But Husserl himself fell into the trap of psychologism according to both D. Føllesdal and J. N. Mohanty; private conversation.

[38] T. Burge, pp. 398–432.

[39] K. Bhattacharya in private correspondence.

While I accept the point of this argument, I do not find it entirely satisfactory for the obvious problem that Nyāya runs into in explaining false awareness, illusions, etc. (See Chapter 6.) Cognitive events that are erroneous, illusory, or false are also facts, but it would be wrong to insist that sentences that express such events describe also facts. Suppose what e_2 grasps is expressed as:

The cat is beside the mat

while the fact is that the cat is *on* the mat. Here our talk of the intentional structures becomes relevant. We have to say that while the individual constituents of e_2's intentional structure (or what is grasped by e_2) are part of the objective reality, their combination is not.

The logical relation between e_1 and e_2 is one of incompatibility, such that the two cannot coexist or coarise in a person. If I misperceive that, the cat is beside the mat, then I cannot at the same time perceive that the cat is on the mat, although the latter is the fact. (Similarly, deluded persons having e_2 can contradict the non-deluded having e_1.) Such incompatibility, therefore, is to be explained in terms of the relationship between their intentional structures which are (partially) reflected in the constructed sentences that express e_1 and e_2. In fact, Nyāya further maintains that the relevant intentional structure is not *fully* represented in the corresponding sentence, for there are always some unrepresented (but obviously understood) elements in the intentional structure. But there is some rule of thumb by following which it is possible to construct the full representation of the structure. Thus, the structure of e_1 would be roughly:

> The cat as qualified by cat-hood is related to the mat, which is qualified by mat-hood, by the connector (relation) substratum-occurrent.

That of e_2 is:

> The cat qualified by cat-hood is related to the mat, which is qualified by mat-hood, by the connector (relation) of joint occurrence in another substratum (the floor).

Obviously the two 'connectors' are incompatible with each other—with respect to the same relata, and hence if either of the events arises, the other will not, in the same subject.

The more usual Nyāya example of the incompatibility relation is that between two cognitive events whose sentential expressions are 'The

cat is on the mat' and 'The cat is *not* on the mat'. Figuratively it is said that there is *killer–killed* relationship between them. The actual opposition is between their intentional structures—structures which are easily constructible from their sentential expressions. (To avoid possible counter-examples, some psychological qualifications are necessary, for which see Sibajivana Bhattacharya.)[40] It is by now clear why verbalization or verbalizability of cognitive events plays an important role in making the alleged intentional structure publicly constructible. It may be that we can talk in terms of 'purported facts' rather than 'facts'. Then, following Kalidas Bhattacharya's suggestion, we can say that all cognitive events grasp *purported* facts, but while in true ones the facts grasped are identifiable with the actual, in non-true (*viparyaya*) and dubious ones (*saṃśaya*), they are only *purported* and hence identifiable as an integral part of the cognitive event itself. In this way, the purported facts would be no better than our alleged intentional structures.

Nyāya and other classical philosophers of India were admittedly dealing with a sort of philosophical psychology. Their explanation of inference etc. was typically in terms of causal sequences of the mental episodes, and relevant physical behaviour was looked upon as an effect of mental events. The attempt of these philosophers was, however, not to justify logical laws with empirical psychology, but to explain our obvious and easy understanding of such laws. Besides, if the explanation given places emphasis also on the intentional structures of the cognitive events (or the so-called 'syntactic' or 'formal' properties of the mental representations) then it tends to be comparatively free from the faults of privacy, contingency, and psychologism. It will be seen that the explanation of these old philosophical psychologists has traits comparable with those of the modern computational theory of mental processes, where formal properties of the mental representations (as opposed to the *content* or 'semantic' properties of the representations) become relevant.

Nyāya gives an account of inference as a sequence of psychological events, the final event being held to be causally connected with the immediately preceding. This causal connection is established between events, not by an appeal to their being typically mental events, but by explicit reference to their intentional structures or the *formal* properties of what they represent as constructs. Let me illustrate. A

[40] See S. Bhattacharya's illuminating paper.

person S infers that there is fire on the hill seeing a body of smoke hovering over it. Nyāya says that event e_1 of S (*parāmarśa*) leads to event e_2 (*anumiti*) of S. Why? Presumably event e_1 is a piece of perceptual knowledge of S, expressible as:

P. The hill has smoke which is invariably concomitant with fire.

This causes event e_2, expressible as:

A. The hill has fire.

The structural description of P (= *parāmarśa*) given by Nyāya is that an entity invariably concomitant with another entity is *known* to be present in the particular place (*vyāpyasya pakṣa-vṛttitā-jñānam*). If we wish Dx to represent the entity x being present in a particular place, and Vxy for the entity x being invariably concomitant with y, then P can be 'syntactically' represented as:

Dx and Vxy or Dx such that Vxy.

Using the same convention, A can be written as:

Dy.

Now the passage from Dx to Dy is both *logical* and *causal* because there is 'syntactic' agreement between them, and also because there is Vxy to allow the substitution of y for x. It is *causal* because if both Dx and Vxy are held together by a person, Dy is bound to arise in him. The presence of Vxy makes the substitution necessary or irresistible. For Vxy is in fact a dummy for an extensional relation which may be represented as (in quantificational symbols):

$(z)(Oxz \supset Oyz)$.
[Read 'O' as 'occurs in'].

The above demonstrates, I believe, how the psychological account tends to be a generalized account, and how the causal necessity tends to coincide with a logical necessity. Further generalization is achieved by treating S as a variable:

For all S, from event e_1 of S follows event e_2 of S.

Nyāya, in fact, talks about *parārthānumāna*, 'inference for others', which is explained in terms of sentences or utterances only, and no mention of S is made at all. The variable S may in this way be dropped from the account of inference as an inessential detail.

This account of inference, as I have already noted, is computational. The input of any P will generate a corresponding A as output, if we assume rationality to be an ineliminable factor of the mind. However, this account does not seek to eliminate intentionality, but only tries to make it a little more transparent. Besides, our attempt to generalize makes an appeal to a sort of counterfactuals, for it is, after all, a causal account.

If P would have happened in any *S*, A would have followed. In other words, we may say that any *S* has the disposition to have two cognitive episodes in succession (invariably), of which the first has the P structure and the second the A structure. Our principle is an idealization from the actual. Critics may say that this is unsatisfactory, because in actual practice we may make mistakes, we may misjudge or mis-infer, and hence dependence upon psychological episodes undermines the certainty which logical truths must have. This criticism can be answered.

Part of the answer lies in the fact that the relevant rules presuppose an *idealized* situation where possibilities of 'misfire' (misjudging or mis-inferring due to some psychological conditions or other) are apparently eliminated. In fact, analogy with computation goes further here. Nyāya claims that there cannot be any misinference, if inference is to follow the derivation of A from P. The input may be defective, and in that case those defects in the input would be 'inference-stoppers' (*anumiti-pratibandhaka*), not 'generators' of wrong inferences. This means that we can only *think* wrongly, but never *infer* wrongly or fallaciously. For when there are defects in the input, the computer will simply say, 'it does not compute'. Moreover, if the input is not defective but simply the result of some misjudgement, then the output, A, would also be a misjudgement although the mechanism of inference would remain undisturbed. Like a computer, it can reject a defective input, but cannot stop a prefabricated input from going through, provided this is made to represent a proper input in all relevant respects. This is also the reason why such sceptical examples as those cited by Śrīharṣa (see 4.10) creep up and complicate the definition of knowledge in Nyāya. (There is a similar resonance in the so-called Gettier examples.) Nyāya admits that we could have a true cognitive episode arising from an untrue cognitive episode following the correct process of inference! In short, the Nyāya strategy is to appeal to our intuitions about knowledge in order to learn something about reasoning and not vice versa.

I may venture to add also that the philosophic insight, or even the lack of it, imbedded in the writings of British empiricists or post-Kantian idealists could not have been totally at fault simply because it was clothed in 'psychologistic guise'. Although this is not my concern here, I would suggest that it is the duty of the heirs of some philosophic tradition to unclothe any confusion, any misleading or confounding 'guise' that their predecessors might have put on. By such an unclothing process (it is usually called 'philosophic reconstruction'), the philosophic worth of the predecessors' doctrine becomes examinable. Therefore, although Frege's attack on psychologism might have alerted us and ushered in a new style of philosophizing, writings of the British empiricists could not thereby be rendered completely worthless. A philosophic doctrine does not necessarily become fundamentally flawed because of the psychologistic guise, if guise is all that it is. And by the same token, the doctrines do not become repudiated if only the style in which they are set out is repudiated.

A case in point would be Locke's essay and a comment on it by John Horn Tooke. Quine, referring to this comment, remarks: 'Tooke held that Locke's essay could be much improved by substituting the word "word" everywhere for the word "idea". What is thereby gained in firmness is attended by no appreciable loss in scope, since ideas without words would have come to little in any event'.[41] What may indeed seem to be puzzling to a modern logician trained in the tradition of Frege, Russell, and Quine is the emphasis of the Indian philosophers in general, and Nyāya in particular, on the causality of mental events submitted as an explanation of inference rules. Let me develop next the notion of a mental occurrence in the Indian context.

4.8 Causal Factors of a Mental Occurrence

Knowing is a mental occurrence. When we describe people as having something in mind, we refer, according to this view, to the inner episode. Following this theory we therefore construct a cognitive world of events or episodes, rather than build a storehouse for gathering a mass of true *propositions*. The episodic view of knowledge, as opposed to the dispositional view of knowledge, subscribes, according to G. Ryle's criticism, to 'a para-mechanical hypothesis', and is thereby guilty of the Cartesian category mistake. It is true that Nyāya uses a mechanistic model to account for the arising of the awareness in us.

[41] W. V. Quine (1978), p. 155.

But I cannot say that it is *guilty* of the Cartesian category mistake. For the 'mental' and the 'physical' may not constitute, in the Indian theory, two strange categories so very different from each other that causal explanation would be relevant to the latter and not the former.

Minds, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika says, are like *things* (*dravya*) and mental processes, i.e. meanings of the verbs denoting some mental conducts, are regarded as causes and effects. The notion of cause and effect is to be understood in a very general sense. Any clockable occurrence or any change could be regarded as an effect and causal exploration may mean simply assigning or recounting the relevant sequential factors. We need not be bogged down by the Humean critique here. Minds, according to the Abhidharma School of Buddhism, are at best faculties, and at worst nothing, i.e. nothing but episodes of consciousness or awareness. In fact, there is a long-standing controversy among the fellow Buddhists, whether mind is a separate faculty like the eye or the faculty of vision, or simply a convenient name for different cognitive events.[42]

The mechanical model of Nyāya can be understood in the following way: the mind (which is to be distinguished from the soul or the self), sometimes in co-operation with a sense-faculty, sometimes acting as a faculty by itself, grasps an object or a fact to generate the effect called the 'knowing' event, which the self (as agent distinct from the mind which is only an instrument here) owns or possesses as a quality or an attribute (*guṇa*). But even this so-called attribute is, in fact, not an attribute in the usual sense of being a universal. Nyāya conceives a piece of cognition as a quality-particular (see Chapter 12.1), which might itself be said to instantiate a universal cognition-hood. A cognitive event or a cognition is a momentary quality-particular. In other words, awareness is a qualifier that qualifies self only momentarily. It emerges and then passes away leaving behind a memory impression, ready to be recalled later, although this later recollection would be another similar cognitive episode.

This mechanistic model is, however, rejected by the Buddhist. But the Buddhist agrees with Nyāya regarding the nature of the end-product. The process in Buddhism is still a cause–effect process (in our minimal sense), although there is no separate entity called 'mind' at the centre of such a causal process, nor is there any self or soul-substance to possess or claim ownership of the resulting or emerging

[42] See Vasubandhu's comment under verses 16 and 17 of ch. I of *Abhidharmakośa*.

cognitive episodes. In Buddhism, the series of awarenesses (or other mental events) arises at every moment. It is a flow of awareness-series where each moment, i.e. each member of the series, is unique and distinct. The awareness-series or the 'mind' series arises by the *mutuality* of the two other series—'faculty' series and the 'graspable object' series. At any given moment, the 'mind' or the awareness is an *ordered pair* of the 'faculty' moment and the 'object' moment. It may be said that the sense-faculty and the corresponding sensible object pick out an awareness, and this is how an awareness arises.

There is, however, a striking agreement between Nyāya and Buddhism regarding the episodic character of awareness, and regarding its being an 'effect' of several factors. This point is important, for it shows at least that to treat a piece of knowledge as a cognitive event and to regard it as an 'effect' or end-product of a process, one need not always be an unconsious follower of the Cartesian model of the 'para-mechanical' legends or the ghost-in-the-machine model. For the Buddhist clearly rejected the legend of the ghost in the machine. To call a cognitive fact an event, and therefore an 'effect', is not, as far as I can see, a metaphysical extension of the notion of event or effect from the realm of the physical to the 'mysteriously' mental. This is, therefore, hardly a case of what Ryle has called a category mistake. To be an episode or effect (*kārya*) is to have a position in a time-series, and this can happen even when we are, alas, unable, with limited means at our disposal, to pinpoint it exactly, but nevertheless it would be—to use one of Ryle's own phrase—'a clockable occurrence'.

From the above it is clear that we should not attribute so-called Cartesian dualism to the Indian discussion of the mental and physical. The idea that mental and physical events are basically and irreducibly different is somewhat foreign to the Indian mind. Hence when there seems to be talk about some interactionism, that is to say talk about a physical process causing a mental experience (as in a sensory perception) and a mental event causing a physical process (as in a mental decision affecting the movement of one's body), it must be taken with a grain of salt! In Nyāya and Buddhism such talk of 'interaction' must be regarded as a reference to simple causation among similar sorts of items.

In the previous section I outlined a psychological model for the Nyāya explanation of how an inference arises. This explanatory model is a theoretical redescription of our common-sense psychological views

about reasoning, argument, and inference, and it has its usefulness when it is formulated as a complete philosophical theory. It should be noted that the present version of the Nyāya view of reasoning is akin to what Gilbert Harman has described as 'a modified Ramsey method'.[43] Assuming a version of the identity theory of mind and body, Harman says that we may see persons as automata (Descartes thought only animals were such!) in order to explain mental occurrences, for an automaton is only a realization of the background psychological model. But this automaton, Harman argues, should not be conceived as a deterministic automaton. This move is obviously in view of what Donald Davidson has called 'the Anomalism of the Mental'.[44] As Harman puts it: 'It is assumed only that various moves are possible. We can explain how he got to wherever it was he got to without implying that he had to get there.'[45] We must note that the Nyāya explanations of the origins of such mental occurrences as inference, doubt, and knowledge are mostly explanations of this kind. The 'misfires' are too frequent to be missed. Hence Nyāya develops a theory about what it calls the 'counteracting' or 'killer' factors (*pratibandhaka*). In its theory of inference, therefore, Nyāya adds the condition called *pakṣatā* to partially account for the psychological and other factors that may stop the occurrence of the inference.[46] *Pakṣatā* combines the 'killer' factors of an inference with the so-called 'resuscitator' factors (*uttejaka*), i.e. 'killer of killers'. Such notions are obviously introduced to underscore the anomalism to some extent and make the causal explanation a little more intelligible. (See also Chapter 12.4.)

4.9 Knowledge: Ryle, Praśastapāda, and Plato

Some of Ryle's own arguments could be used, curiously enough, in favour of the thesis I am arguing for. The result only appears to be paradoxical, for Ryle was arguing for the elimination of the 'inner-world' metaphysic, i.e. the rejection of the 'two-world' doctrine, while I am trying to argue that the so-called mental happenings denoted by the cognitive verbs are episodes that are not in any sense 'mysterious'

[43] G. Harman (1973), pp. 41–3.
[44] D. Davidson (1967b), p. 224.
[45] G. Harman (1973), p. 51.
[46] One may carefully analyse the comments made by Raghunātha on Gaṅgeśa's section on *Pakṣatā*. Among other things, it is noted somewhat facetiously that arousal of sexual desire (cf. *kāminī-jijñāsā*) would obstruct the occurrence of an inference even when all the required causal factors are present.

or 'occult' or 'ghostly' manoeuvres. They are normal episodes that are *caused* in the minimal sense. Their emergence is regulated or determined at least *sequentially* by some other factors. They are not less *concrete* than, say, a car accident. A car accident is, of course, in some sense less concrete than a car etc., and so is the motion of the car. But as events they are 'effects'. The cognitive events are likewise effects and even reportable, not by an eye-witness, but by a 'mind-witness', i.e. by the person to whom they belong. I do not report a mysterious or occult incident imagined by a ghost when I only report that I saw a dog in my garden. In short, Ryle's criticisms are relevant to Cartesian dualism, not to the Nyāya–Buddhist theory of mind (see Chapter 12.4).

It is agreed that the cognitive verbs ('see', 'hear', 'know') that I am considering here are 'achievement verbs' or 'got-it' verbs *à la* Ryle. They are not task verbs or 'try' verbs. Here a Naiyāyika or a Buddhist could accept Ryle's point. These verbs do not stand for processes, performances, ways of being occupied, and *a fortiori* not for 'secret performances' or 'ways of being privily occupied'.[47] It is further agreed that they are not tryings but '*things* got by trying or by luck'. It is not therefore incompatible to say with Nyāya or the Buddhist that they are effects or products. They are, in fact, non-repeatable particulars for both Nyāya and Buddhism. They are momentary, but the most important part of them, their structured contents, can be stored or deposited in the memory bank to be recalled or used in another later event. In this way the Nyāya and others would account for the dispositionality of our knowledge and beliefs.

In fact we can note a contrast between the type of dispositionality of physical things—a brittle glass or soluble sugar—and the dispositionality of psychological states. The dispositional character of knowledge and belief, I think, is more like that of being a swimmer, a cook, or a runner. A swimmer does not always swim in the water, nor is it that he never swims. A cook must have cooked at least once in his life. But a glass is called brittle even when, perhaps mostly when, it is not broken. We call a lump of sugar soluble probably before we put it in the cup of tea. I cannot, however, have a piece of knowledge in the dispositional sense unless I have had first a biographical episode, a cognitive event some time in the past. Similarly I cannot be said to believe that *p* if I have never been a 'mind-witness' to some cognitive episode that *p*.

[47] G. Ryle (1949), p. 151.

(Here I ignore the complication due to the acceptance of so-called 'unconscious beliefs'.) To say that I have a knowledge that *p* is to say, in our theory, that I am entitled to a 'storehouse' containing *p*, where *p* is the residue of an actual cognitive event that arose just a moment ago or some time in the past. I am a knower in this sense, and in the same way I can be a swimmer or a runner or even a winner (an achievement word).

A distinction is often made between *knowing-that* and *knowing-how*. This distinction is illuminating and, as Ryle has convincingly argued, not all 'knowing-how' presupposes 'knowing-that' (we can call one 'theoretical' and the other 'practical').[48] The supposed connection between the two types of knowledge is plausible, but in both cases 'knowledge' is to be understood as dispositions. The verb 'to know' or its Sanskrit equivalent, is, of course, often used dispositionally. (For example, in such cases as 'I know *dharma*, religious and moral duties, but I am unable to act accordingly' it is used dispositionally.)

In Vaiśeṣika terminology, the dispositional knowledge, whether it is theoretical or practical, is included under what the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika calls *bhāvanā* which is a *saṃskāra*, i.e. a dispositional property of the self (*ātma-guṇa*). Praśastapāda[49] explicitly classifies not only what are called habits generated from previous, repeated practices and care taken to practise (*saṃskārātiśayaḥ*), but also what Ryle has called intelligent capacities inculcated more by training than drill. Praśastapāda enumerates under the second category arts and crafts (*vidyā-vyāyāmādiṣu*) such as chanting, music, painting, and archery. Suppose we consider the following sentence:

> He knows how to paint.

According to the Vaiśeṣika categorization scheme, this would be analysed as:

> He has acquired a disposition (*saṃskāra*) which is actualized when he paints.

Another important distinction is made between 'knowledge-of' and 'knowledge-that'. This will be very important from the point of view of a similar distinction with regard to perception. The distinction roughly corresponds to French *connaître* and *savoir*, or in English, acquaintance with an object and knowing that something is the case.[50] This

[48] G. Ryle, ibid.
[49] Praśastapāda (*Vyomavatī*), p. 633.
[50] F. Jackson, p. 154.

distinction will be equally applicable to our episodic conception of knowledge. It would be an interesting issue to see whether (and if so, in what sense) 'knowledge-of' presupposes 'knowledge-that'. In modern philosophy of perception, it is sometimes claimed[51] that seeing-that can be analysed in terms of seeing-things, but not vice versa. This is held in opposition to the frequently made claim that seeing-that is more fundamental. The distinction between seeing-that and seeing-things would be, in any case, relevant for our discussion of Indian theories of perception. If seeing-that involves making a perceptual judgement, then Nyāya, for example, would claim that it presupposes seeing, or simple awareness, of at least one element of the resulting judgement (the predicate-element). This point will be discussed later in some detail. (See Chapter 10.1.)

In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates apparently rejects the definition of knowledge as perception; for 'perception', it is claimed, does not seem to have a propositional context, whereas knowledge, since it requires 'a grasp of truth', should have a propositional construction. (There are obvious difficulties with this view of Plato, see McDowell.)[52] If this means that Plato, in the given context at least, maintained that pure perceptions are perceptions only of objects, and hence non-propositional in structure while knowledge, in order to grasp a truth (or to get at 'being') requires always a propositional content, then this philosophic insight would be very relevant to the discussion of the issues between Nyāya and Buddhism in the Indian context. The Buddhist Diṅnāga seems to hold quite clearly that pure perception or (sensory) proper perception (and this included the list enumerated by Socrates, 186d 10–11, 'seeing, hearing, smelling, feeling cold, feeling hot') is non-propositional, or, as Diṅnāga would like to put it, 'conception-free' or free from construction. But, for the very same reason, Diṅnāga argues in favour of a view that is diametrically opposed to Plato's view here. For Diṅnāga, such perceptions, precluding the possibility of error, deserve better to be called knowledge proper, for they are direct, certain, incorrigible, and self-evident. They preclude the possibility of error just because they are non-judgemental, non-propositional, and hence non-imaginative in character.

The distrust that Plato expressed succinctly in such a view seems to be more in line with the most elaborate Nyāya critique of the position

[51] D. Pears, p. 4. [52] J. McDowell, pp. 118, 142–3.

of Diṅnāga on this issue. The issue between Nyāya and Buddhism here reflects in fact a 'deeper-level' difference in their philosophical attitudes. Faced with Nāgārjuna's scepticism the Buddhist here acts first like a Cartesian epistemologist and tries to reach the 'rock bottom' certainty. In his search for the foundation of empirical knowledge he reaches pure sensory awareness and claims that since it allows incorrigible and indubitable certainty it constitutes knowledge proper. Russell and Moore found the indubitable foundation of knowledge in sense-impressions or sense-data in the same way. But while for Cartesian epistemologists this was the *starting*-point, for the Buddhist this was the vantage-point from which we must regard other cases of derivative knowledge as secondary, they being called knowledge by convention only. The Nyāya critique is that if we preclude the possibility of an awareness's being erroneous by insisting upon its non-propositional nature, we would eliminate thereby even the possibility of its being true either. There is thus much to be said in favour of Plato's insight in rejecting the 'knowledge is perception' thesis on this ground.

Nyāya puts forward a fallibilistic scheme: if it is possible for an awareness to be an illusion, it must also be possible for it to be a 'non-illusion' or a piece of knowledge. If it is *logically* impossible for an awareness to be wrong, dubious, or illusory, it would also be impossible for it to be right, i.e. a piece of knowledge. It is in fact claimed by Navya-Nyāya that the pure, non-constructive, non-judgemental, sensory awareness of the kind the Buddhist would like to talk about as knowledge would in fact lie beyond the categories of knowledge and error (non-knowledge), for its non-propositional character makes it impossible for it to be either wrong or right, true or false.[53] To put it facetiously, the Nyāya would say that the Buddhist being intimidated by the sceptics administers a tentative cure for the malady of universal doubt—a medicine which almost kills the patient. It is like chopping one's head off to avoid a headache. Somewhat similar criticism may apply to those who put too much faith in the pure datum that stands in isolated glory. In any case, the important point made by Nyāya here is that the question of truth and falsity, being right and wrong, arises when and only when there is a propositional content in a cognitive episode. Otherwise, the term 'knowledge' becomes vacuous. What we, therefore, ordinarily call 'knowledge of things' must

[53] This is the point made by Gaṅgeśa and others. For Gaṅgeśa's view, see *Pratyakṣa*, p. 402. Viśvanātha repeats it in *Bhāṣāpariccheda*, verses 135cd and 136ab.

be interpreted as a knowledge of '$\phi(x)$' (i.e. a complex object). If the 'object' is reduced to a simple, we should call it an awareness of x. This does not come from Plato, however. It comes from the Nyāya–Buddhist discussion over the centuries.

4.10 *Knowledge: Śrīharṣa and Gettier*

The pramāṇa theorists in general and Nyāya in particular understand the concept of knowledge (in the episodic sense) in a way that could be spelled out as follows:

(1) Knowledge is a truth-hitting episode.
(2) It is non-dubious in the sense that no reasonable ground for doubting its truth has appeared (*a-prāmāṇya-saṃśaya nāskandita*).
(3) It is born of a faultless 'causal' or 'justificatory' factor (*a-duṣṭa-kāraṇajanya*); or, it is born of an 'unfailing' or 'non-deviating' causal factor (*a-vyabhicāri-kāraṇajanya*).

The awkwardness of the alternation between 'causal' and 'justificatory' in (3) is but a necessary part of the explanation proposed by the *pramāṇa* doctrine, for a *pramāṇa* in the Sanskrit tradition is conceived as a combination of both evidence and causal factor. As I have already noted, it is both a piece of evidence for knowing something and also a cause, in fact the most efficient causal factor (cf. *sādhakatama* in Pāṇini, 1.4.42) of the mental episode called knowledge. In the case of perceptual knowledge, the faultlessness of sense-faculty and mind is appealed to, as well as that of other external conditions such as normal lighting and normal distance. In inference etc., faultlessness of the evidence adduced becomes crucial.[54]

Udayana defined 'knowledge' (that is, *pramā*) as the cognitive experience of *that-ness* (*tattva*). This definition can reasonably be expanded to give the above three conditions. However, if this is an acceptable explanation of the concept of knowledge in the Indian tradition, then it faces certain decisive objections from the Indian sceptics such as Śrīharṣa and Jayarāśi. I shall deal with three counter-examples cited by Śrīharṣa against Udayana.[54]

[54] Udayana formulates his definition of *pramā* slightly differently in different places. See his *Lakṣaṇamālā*. For a good discussion of this point betwen Udayana and Śrīharṣa, see P. Granoff, pp. 28–33. A 'causal' explanation is also a justification or can be taken to be so in a broader sense. In the discussion of 'justified true belief as knowledge', justification is usually conceived in terms of an argument with evidential support. In the *pramāṇa*, however, it is frequently asked about an object x or a thesis p, what is the

Suppose I close my palm and ask a gambler, 'How many dice do I have in my palm?' The gambler replies, 'Five.' And five it is. It will not do to argue here that it is a mere supposition that is accidentally proven right (cf. *kāka-tālīya-saṃvāda*) and hence initially it belonged to the category of dubiety (that is to say, condition (2) is not fulfilled). For, Śrīharṣa says, the reply carried confidence and hence expressed the certainty of the gambler. The situation, he argues, is similar to that of farmers who toil hard with the knowledge that crops will grow.

If we wish to dismiss such an episode as a pure fluke, we can turn to the second example. Suppose somebody misperceives a cloud of dust as a line of smoke and consequently infers that there is a body of fire in the field beyond. Further suppose there is actually a body of fire there with or without smoke, but the person's inference happens to be based upon a misperception. Can the subject be said to know if an outstanding error lies in his route to such a cognitive episode? (Notice that the person acquires a justified true belief in this case, as does the subject in most Gettier examples.)

It may be argued that the particular body of fire present in the field does not strictly figure in the inferred awareness and hence it is not 'truth-hitting' in the strictest sense. The imagined smoke which he thought he saw would be connected or concomitant with some imagined body of fire, and this imagined fire is certainly not present in the field. Śrīharṣa rejects such an argument. For the person, he says, may not be truly aware of the specific object here but he is certainly truly aware of the general characteristic and hence knows that there is some (indefinite) body of fire there. For example, it is not the case that one cannot be truly aware of a general fact such as 'The flower-garland has been prepared by a person', although one may not know which particular person prepared it.

Third, suppose one (correctly) identifies an object at a distance as a cow by looking at a piece of cloth around the neck of the cow and mistaking it for the actual dewlap. Would this be a piece of knowledge? asks Śrīharṣa.

It is not absolutely clear how these examples could be compared or even contrasted with the Gettier-type examples. There is at least one aspect of the problem where the two sets of examples seem to

pramāṇa for x (i.e. x's existence), or for p (being true)? (In fact many arguments run as follows: x does not exist or p is not true, for there is no *pramāṇa*, no evidence, no argument with evidential support, for it.) And the citation of a *pramāṇa*, that is, a (faultless) causal factor which (most efficiently, vide Paṇini) generates an awareness (and hence a true awareness) of x or of p, would be regarded as an acceptable answer.

converge. We describe a pair of situations where two cognitive experiences arise and they are both truth-hiting and non-dubious. But we are inclined to call one of them knowledge and the other not-knowledge although both have some justification or evidence in favour. Our reason is presumably that in one case the justification or evidence is legitimate while in the other case it is not so. There may be some further complications with the Gettier examples, but I will not go into them here.

To continue with Śrīharṣa. He argues that condition (3) which is supposed to exclude the above counter-examples, is badly in need of further clarification for it is not fully intelligible. Besides, if it could somehow be made intelligible, it would render conditions (1) and (2) redundant. For cognitive episodes arising from a set of faultless 'causal' factors would necessarily be truth-hitting and non-dubious. The counter-examples are supposed to show that there can be cases of awareness that are true and non-dubious (and in some cases may have evidence in support) but still they would fail to be *pramā*, 'knowledge'. Śrīharṣa says that condition (3) is actually what is technically called 'an impotent qualification' (*a-samartha-viśeṣaṇa*) because it is a non-differentiator! It cannot exclude the counter-examples unless it is properly formulated. Very generally one may say that the point of the Gettier examples is similar. The problem lies here with the formulation of the further condition to go alongside with (i) p is true and (ii) S believes that p. In fact a follower of Śrīharṣa could have said that this further condition ('justified' part) is actually an impotent qualification, an *a-samartha-viśeṣaṇa*, for it is unable to exclude those cases of beliefs that are not knowledge.[55] The main thrust of Śrīharṣa's argument is that an intelligible definition of knowledge along this line is impossible. The opponent has to decide whether or not such examples should be called 'cases of knowledge' in the sense of true and non-dubious awareness.

I shall now try to formulate, deriving my points from the philosophical insights of Gaṅgeśa (see his treatment of the concept of 'knowledge', *pramā* and *pramātva-graha*), the possible Nyāya response to Śrīharṣa's criticism. The following considerations are directly relevant for resolving the problem with Śrīharṣa's examples (and they might, if only indirectly, focus upon a different aspect of the so-called Gettier examples).

[55] Śrīharṣa, pp. 211–17.

First, we might want, following Gaṅgeśa, to restrict the primary (philosophical) use of 'to know' (*pramā*) to designate simply any 'truth-hitting' cognitive episode, any awareness that grasps *x* as *F* provided *x* is *F*.[56] This will turn many cases of awareness into true awareness, into knowledge, even when we are not sure that those events are not knowledge-events.

Second, Gaṅgeśa emphasizes that knowledge-hood (in this rather technical sense) and illusion-hood are not two mutually exclusive class-properties or universals (*jāti*). A particular cognitive event can therefore be instantiating the property knowledge-hood only in one part and the lack of it in another part. It has been argued that even in a typical illusion 'this is a snake' there is knowledge-hood in so far as the word 'this' correctly refers to an object lying in front of the speaker (which means that the object referred to is qualified by whatever is signified by 'this-ness').

Third, following Nyāya, we might introduce a distinction between one's knowing and one's knowing that one knows. As we shall see, in the Nyāya analytical study of knowledge these two are treated as two distinct events. Presumably they arise in us in quick succession falsely to generate the notion of simultaneity (or on rare occasion may arise simultaneously provided all the required conditions are fulfilled). It is maintained that these two events often remain indistinguishable in ordinary parlance. One's knowing that *p* is a much simpler event than one's knowing that one knows that *p*, and hence the set of 'causal' factors leading to the first is non-identical with that leading to the second. Ordinarily, whenever I can say that I know, I can unhesitatingly say that I know that I know. But when we can say of somebody else that he knows, it is not invariably the case that we can say that *he* knows that he knows. For to know that he knows the subject must use, according to Nyāya, an 'unconscious' inference (of the kind to be discussed in the next chapter). In other words, the subject must be aware of some 'evidential' support, and this awareness (*liṅga-parāmarśa*) will give the required 'causal' basis for the knowledge that he knows.

If the above considerations are taken into account we can proceed to resolve Śrīharṣa's problem as follows. In all such cases we have to say that the subject 'knows' (in the primary sense defined by Gaṅgeśa) as long as his cognitive episode is endowed with the truth-hitting character, but the subject does not know that he knows, for his

[56] See Gaṅgeśa's *Pratyakṣa* volume, p. 401.

inference, his evidential support, has not been faultless! The subject thinks that he knows and hence being asked can cite his evidence (false awareness of smoke or dewlap), but if his mistake is pointed out he would withdraw saying, 'Oh! I did not *know*'. One could interpret this as saying, 'Oh! I thought I knew, but I did not know that my awareness was right for a different reason'. If such an interpretation is plausible, then Nyāya could resolve the dilemma posed by Śrīharṣa and at the same time provide an explanation of our linguistic intuition about the verb 'to know' (*pramā*). The general reluctance of ordinary people to call such cases instances of knowledge is to be explained away as being connected with the knowledge of knowledge rather than knowledge *simpliciter*. (Vācaspati Miśra II in his *Khaṇḍanoddhāra* gives an odd reply to Śrīharṣa. He says that the subject has knowledge in such a case because it coincides with God's knowledge and God's knowledge cannot be based upon false evidence! The reply however is not silly at all. For it assumes there to be a 'god's-eye view' of the universe and says that our awareness becomes knowledge to the extent it coincides with this 'god's eye' view.)

There are generally two slightly different ways, favoured by contemporary philosophers, of resolving the problem of knowledge posed by the Gettier examples. One is to require that we reconstruct the route to the true belief as an argument from premiss to conclusion and demand that the conclusion must not be essentially dependent upon any false proposition or false evidence (G. Harman).[57] The other is to say that we know only if there is a proper sort of causal connection between our belief and what we know, and when knowledge is explicitly acquired by inference it is claimed that the subject knows only if his inference reconstructed the relevant causal connection between evidence and conclusion (A. Goldman).[58] There are many important issues here which have their resonance in the Indian *pramāṇa* theory, but a discussion of these issues must be reserved for another occasion. I wish to make only three brief comments here.

First, at some level the difference between the two ways mentioned seems to be roughly one between the 'cause' vocabulary and the 'because' vocabulary.[59] There is a basic agreement between them. Second, Goldman's 'causal' theory of knowing could be explored further to see what implications, if any, it would have for the *pramāṇa* theory in general and the Nyāya doctrine in particular. Third, Nyāya

[57] G. Harman (1968), p. 164. Harman calls it the 'no false lemmas' provision.

[58] A. Goldman, pp. 357–72. [59] G. Harman (1973), p. 130.

may be inclined, contrary to the linguistic intuition of ordinary English speakers, to say that the subject in most Gettier examples has knowledge but his own certainty about his having such knowledge is illegitimate.

I shall explain only the last comment. Consider a typical Gettier example (discussed by Harman).[60] Someone comes to know of something by being told it by someone else. In another case he is aware of it in the same way but the speaker does not believe what he says. (Recall Candrakīrti's example which is not very different.) We are more inclined to say that the person knows in the first case than in the second. Arguably this is our ordinary linguistic intuition about the verb 'to know'. But we may recall Gaṅgeśa's technical definition of *pramā*, 'knowledge', as one which grasps *x* as *F* provided *x* is characterizable as *F*. If this is accepted (as an explication of the concept involved), we would be more inclined to say that the subject knows even in most Gettier cases. Our hesitation or ambivalence may be explained as applying not to the first (primary) knowledge but to the subject's *right* to be sure (that is to say, his knowledge that he knows).

The subject obviously feels sure in both cases that he knows. Translated in Nyāya language, this means that he is aware with certainty in both cases that he knows. But as we shall see in the next chapter, Nyāya would say that one may be aware with certainty (*anuvyavasāya*) that he knows that *p*, and still *not* know that he knows that *p* (*prāmāṇya-jñapti*). For, it is argued, one knows that he knows that *p* when and only when he has properly inferred its knowledgehood from evidence. And in the second situation in most Gettier cases, it is the second awareness or certitude (or belief, if you like) that 'misfires' because it misconnects evidence and conclusion.

In sum, the Nyāya (Gaṅgeśa's) solution seems to be this: We restrict the technical use of 'know' to the cases of true cognition or true awareness. The popular or conventional use of 'know' may include cases where the subject not only knows but also knows that he knows through proper evidence, and he does not depend upon any false evidence or his knowledge of knowledge arises from proper causal conditions.

[60] Ibid., p. 21.

5

Knowing that One Knows

Of the two birds perching on the same branch of the tree,
one enjoys the juicy fruit while the other simply looks on.

ANCIENT VEDIC LORE

5.1 Rival Theories about Knowledge of Knowledge

In claiming that knowing is an 'inner' episode classifiable with other similar episodes, we do not and need not claim that knowing consists in being in a special (infallible) state of mind. For if such a state of mind means that we possess some 'inner searchlight' which guarantees absolutely the truth of the experience or the reality of the object upon which it is directed, then it will be, as Ayer has pointed out, patently wrong.[1] I am not taking issue here with the phenomenologist (for this is at best a caricature of E. Husserl) but I wish to reject the hypothetical position that may endorse the 'inner searchlight' theory. It is generally agreed that if something is known, it must be true or it must exist. Nyāya says that this fact does not allow us to say that if one knows then necessarily one knows that one knows and this holds even when one is quite convinced about what one knows. One may in fact be absolutely sure about what one cognizes but such a certainty by itself does not amount to knowledge.

Nyāya conceives the matter roughly as follows. A verbalizable cognitive episode can be either a knowing episode or a 'non-knowing' episode, such as an illusion or a doubt. It is a knowing episode when it hits the 'truth'. Knowledge-ness consists in its truth-hitting character, and not in its indubitability or in its constructive character. When it misses truth it is a 'non-knowing' episode. Even an archer cannot always hit the bull's-eye. Nyāya fallibilism says that if it is possible for him to hit it, it is also possible for him to miss it. If he hits it, it is not simply by being absolutely sure that he does so. There are other causal factors that are responsible for making the incident a successful one. It may be true that the archer hits the mark mostly when he is absolutely sure and similarly a man may feel absolutely sure when he knows. But

[1] A. J. Ayer (1956), pp. 23–4.

the point is that the fact of hitting the mark or missing it is independent of the presence or absence of such certainty.

There is a remarkable variety of views regarding *how do we know that we know* in classical Indian philosophy. It is by no means easy to explain the agreement and disagreement among different philosophers in this respect. I shall highlight different components of the main issue and formulate different rival theses with the hope that the fundamental concern of these philosophers will thereby be made clear. Let us denote each individual awareness-episode by such symbols, c_1, c_2, . . . When I am aware of an object, *a*, or a fact, *p*, I may be truly aware or I may be falsely aware (in which case the object is wrongly characterized or *p* is not the case). I may be dubiously aware in which case I oscillate between alternatives, whether *p* is or is not the case. In such a situation the awareness-event is called a doubt (*saṁśaya*). An awareness-event that amounts to knowledge is a special kind of event, for I have to be *truly* aware of whatever I am aware of. Let us say that an awareness-event amounts to knowledge in this sense if and only if it has a special feature, *k*; if it is not a piece of knowledge, it is either a doubt or an illusion (false certainty) in which case let us say it has a different feature or property, *d*. (To avoid complexities, let us ignore other types of awareness-events.)

I would use the transitive verb 'apprehends' which joins the name of an awareness-event with that of an object. The object may be either a simple thing, *a*, or a complex having a propositional structure (call it *p*). For example, if I am simply aware of Pussy the cat before me, the awareness-event apprehends Pussy. If, however, I am aware that Pussy is on the mat, then the event apprehends that Pussy is on the mat. We may now formulate the rival theses:

T_1: If an awareness, c_1, arises, it apprehends not only the thing, *a*, or the proposition *p*, but also c_1 itself by the same token.

T_2: If c_1 arises, it apprehends only the thing, *a*, or the proposition, *p*, and we need another event, c_2, to apprehend c_1.

The Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka along with the Buddhist of the Diṅnāga school accept T_1. (The Advaita Vedāntin also accepts T_1 but interprets it in a different way which we will forbear to go into here.) The significant difference between the Buddhist and the Prābhākara should however be stressed. The Buddhist does not recognize the category of soul-substance and hence 'the subject is aware that he is aware' means simply that an awareness is aware of itself. The

Prābhākara recognizes a soul-substance and hence an awareness is said to *reveal* an object to the self. Thus, 'the subject is aware that he is aware' means here that the awareness reveals itself to the self. Śālikanātha, a later exponent of the Prābhākara school, says that each awareness-event apprehends or 'reveals' the trio, the object or the fact, the awareness itself and the cognizer self. In fact all these three are 'perceived' in each cognitive act or awareness-event (cf. *tri-puṭī-pratyakṣatā-vāda*).[2] (It seems that the earlier Prābhākara view was quite different. The earlier view maintained that the awareness, c_1, apprehends or reveals (to the self) the object only, neither itself nor the cognizing self. But nevertheless when such an awareness arises, it automatically becomes the subject matter of *vyavahāra*, i.e. we can talk about it, etc. just as we can talk about its object that is apprehended. Similarly the cognizing self also becomes the subject matter of *vyavahāra*, we can talk about it, etc., only when an awareness has arisen. In other words, the awareness, c_1, does not reveal itself or the cognizer self, but it certifies our *vyavahāra*, our practical behaviour, our speech-behaviour, etc. with regard to these two.) The Prābhākara (Śālikanātha) calls T_1 the 'self-revelation theory of awareness' (*sva-prakāśa-vāda*) while the Buddhist calls it the 'self-awareness of awareness' (*sva-saṁvedana*).

T_1 implies that just as an occurrence of pain arises and makes itself known by a single stroke, an awareness-event arises and makes itself known at the same instant. The Buddhist regards each awareness-event *perceptual* in the sense that it has as its integral part an 'inner' (mental) perception of the awareness-event itself. T_2, the rival thesis, is accepted by the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and the Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsaka (follower of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa), although they understand and interpret it differently.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika maintains that each awareness-episode is usually followed by another episode, an inward perceptual recognition of the first episode. The second episode is called *anu-vyavasāya*, a sort of 'apperception' (more or less in the sense of Leibniz) having a very specific character. The Bhāṭṭa, following Kumārila, holds that an awareness-episode is by nature imperceptible and hence although we become *mentally* aware of an awareness-episode that has arisen in us the second awareness cannot be perceptual. Rather the process is explained as follows: When an awareness apprehends an object, the

[2] Śālikanātha, pp. 170–3.

latter (the object) takes on a new character, 'apprehended-ness' (it is 'tinged with awareness', so to say). On the evidence of this property, apprehended-ness (*jñātatā*) in the object, the subject *infers* that an awareness has arisen in him. Hence the mental awareness of an awareness episode is in this way inferential, not perceptual.[3] There is a third view among the Mīmāṃsakas, ascribed to Murāri Miśra. Murāri (sources lost but reported by Gaṅgeśa and others) apparently rejected the Bhāṭṭa view and agreed with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika about the *anu-vyavasāya* or inner perception of each awareness-event immediately afterwards.

If I am aware of a thing or a fact, must I be always aware of this fact, that I am aware? We can reformulate this question in terms of two rival theses:

> T_3: If an awareness, c_1, arises, it is necessarily cognized, apprehended or revealed to the self.
>
> T_4: If an awareness, c_1, arises, it is only contingent that it is also cognized. Most such episodes are cognized or apprehended, but some may arise and go out of existence without being cognized at all.

Most philosophers with different persuasion, tend to accept T_3 without having any serious misgivings about it. The Buddhist, the Mīmāṃsaka (both schools), and the Vedāntin all agree on this point. For how can there be an awareness (in the subject) which the subject is not aware of? In fact T_1 entails T_3 in some acceptable sense. Even T_2 seems fully compatible with T_3. (It is however not absolutely clear whether Kumārila Bhaṭṭa would insist that we always invariably make the 'unconscious' inference by which we become aware of our awareness. Murāri Miśra apparently would insist that there is always an *anu-vyavasāya*, apperception.) It is only the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika who takes the bold step to combine T_2 and T_4 and assert that an uncognized or unapprehended awareness-event is not an impossibility!

To put it simply: The Buddhist and the Prābhākara accept T_1 and T_3. The Bhāṭṭa (Kumārila) accepts T_2 and T_3. (Murāri too accepts T_2 and T_3 but interprets T_3 differently.) The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika accepts T_2 and T_4. However T_4 is highly controversial. It has been claimed to be counter-intuitive. But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika argues that this is simply a

[3] Kumārila's theory is called *jñātatā-liṅgakānumāna* of *jñāna*. We know first the object, and then from the known-ness of the object we infer that a cognitive episode has therefore arisen.

bias which wishes to accord a unique status to the cases of awareness-events and ultimately favours a sort of idealism! (See next section.)

If the property, k, turns an awareness-event into a knowledge-event let us represent particular knowledge-events by $c_1 + k_1$, $c_2 + k_2$, . . . Similarly we may represent awareness-events that do not amount to knowledge by $c_1 + d_1$, $c_2 + d_2$, . . . Now concerning a knowledge-event these philosophers ask two questions: How does a knowledge-event originate (cf. *utpatti*)? and how is such a knowledge-event known (cf. *jñapti*)?[4] As regards the former we can again formulate two rival theses:

T_5: Whatever causes c_1 to arise causes, by the same token, $(c_1 + k_1)$ to arise.

T_6: Since $(c_1 + k_1)$ is a special case of c_1, the natural causal complex G that gives rise to c_1 needs to be supplemented by some additional condition H in order to cause $(c_1 + k_1)$ to arise.

Here T_5 means that when an awareness arises under normal conditions it becomes a knowledge-event automatically unless the circumstances or the causal complex that gave rise to it were 'tampered with' in some way or other. If I am aware I am *normally* truly aware, for truth (or knowledge-hood) is a *natural* property of awareness. If an awareness lacks truth or knowledge-hood it is an irregular episode caused by some illegitimate intrusion in the usual causal complex. All the Mimāṃsakas, the Bhāṭṭa and the Prābhākara alike, uphold this view. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika upholds T_6. This means that the set of causal conditions that gives rise to awareness either include a subset called *guṇas* which turn the awareness-event into a knowledge-event or it may include a different subset called *doṣas* which would turn the event into an illusion, false certainty or doubt. The factors that generate the property knowledge-hood in the resulting awareness do not form a natural part of the causal complex, for the factors that generate the property, lack of knowledge, in the awareness can intervene at any time!

T_5 is similar to saying that man is naturally good or mangoes are naturally sweet but intervention of *bad* or abnormal factors or extraneous circumstances makes a man evil or a mango sour. On the other hand T_6 argues that truth or knowledge-hood is not an intrinsic property of awareness much as goodness is not an essential property of

[4] See Kumārila, *Codanā-sūtra* section, verses 33–61. See also Gaṅgeśa, *Prāmāṇya-vāda* section.

mankind or sweetness not essential for something to be a mango. What a man becomes, good or evil, depends upon the circumstances or causal factors against which he reacts. When a mango grows it becomes sweet or sour depending upon the causal factors from which it grows. An awareness likewise becomes true or false depending upon the causal conditions from which it arises. This is the Nyāya view.

As regards how a piece of knowledge is known (by the knower) there are two rival theses:

> T_7: Whatever causes the knowledge of the awareness, c_1, causes, by the same token, the knowledge of its knowledge-hood.
>
> T_8: The causal complex that gives rise to the knowledge of the awareness, c_1, needs to be supplemented by some additional condition in order to give rise the knowledge of its knowledge-hood.

The Mīmāṃsakas (all sub-schools) accept T_7 and combine it with T_5. T_7 means that if a person knows that he has an awareness (and that awareness happens to be a piece of knowledge) he automatically knows the knowledge-hood of that awareness. Now there are three ways (according to the three sub-schools of Mimāṃsā, see above), by which an awareness is supposed to be known to the subject; it can be self-cognized, or perceived by an inward perception, *anu-vyavasāya*, or it can be inferred on the evidence of the apprehended-ness, *jñātatā*, of the object apprehended. In each of these three cases, the Mīmāṃsaka will argue that not only the awareness itself is revealed or known to the subject in this way but also its essential character, knowledge-hood, by the same token. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as well as the Buddhist finds this thesis totally unacceptable. They uphold T_8. The Buddhist combines T_1 with T_8. For according to him (e.g. Dharmakīrti), an awareness may be self-cognized, i.e. apprehended by itself but to know whether it is also a piece of knowledge or not we need to depend upon the practical activity or *vyavahāra*. Our awareness of an object is known to be a piece of knowledge when the *vyavahāra* conforms to the expected behaviour of the object cognized.

Nyāya combines T_2, T_4, and T_6 with T_8. T_8 is interpreted here as follows: Our inward mental perception (*anu-vyavasāya*) may apprehend the awareness of the preceding moment, but to know whether it is a piece of knowledge or not we need to depend upon an (unconscious) inference. We infer the knowledge-hood of an awareness on the basis of our successful activities that are propelled by such an awareness.

That is, we infer on the basis of confirming evidence that an awareness is actually a piece of knowledge. For otherwise our lingering doubt about the truth or knowledge-hood of many of our awarenesses that have already arisen in us would remain unexplained. For, the moment I know that I have an awareness I cannot know that I have also a *true* awareness or knowledge.

I shall conclude this section by referring to another pair of views mentioned in this connection. The question is raised: How do we know that a particular awareness lacks knowledge-hood? If I am wrongly aware, how do I know that I am wrongly aware? The following rival views are expressed:

T_9: Whatever gives rise to the knowledge of the awareness itself, causes thereby also the knowledge of its lack of knowledge-hood or lack of its truth-character or (briefly) its falsity.

T_{10}: The causal complex that gives rise to the knowledge of an awareness needs to be supplemented by some additional condition in order to give rise to our knowledge of its falsity.

(Only the Sāṃkhya school is supposed to uphold T_9 along with T_7. This is how it is reported by Kumārila and others.)[5] The Bhāṭṭa (Kumārila himself), curiously enough, upholds T_{10}. According to Kumārila therefore, if an awareness happens to be also a piece of knowledge, the subject knows that it is a piece of knowledge as soon as he knows that it is an awareness. But if it happens to be false, knowledge of its falsity is not forthcoming along with the knowledge of the awareness itself. The subject has to depend upon extraneous conditions or factors to determine that falsity. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika however combines T_{10} with T_8. There is an (unconscious or conscious) inference which helps us to determine whether an awareness is actually a piece of knowledge or simply a false certainty. In other words, we need some confirming evidence to confirm lack of knowledge-hood or falsity. If I have misperceived some object and taken it to be a dog, some other evidence will tell me that it is not a dog and hence it was a misperception, and my apperception of the perception would be of no help in this matter.

It is claimed that the Buddhist upholds T_8 along with T_9. This is just the opposite of the Bhāṭṭa position. Knowledge-hood or truth is known through the confirmation of our behaviour or *vyavahāra* but falsity is

[5] This position is ascribed to the Sāṃkhya school by Mādhava. See *Sarvadarśanasaṃgraha*, p. 279.

self-revealing! It seems to me that this applies to theory of judgement or propositional awareness in the Diṅnāga–Dharmakīrti school.[6] For it is argued here that all constructive or conception-loaded awareness-events (judgements) are by definition false for they are about concepts only, not about the objects or particulars. But some of these judgements are said to yield knowledge provided they conform to our practical behaviour or activity (*vyavahāra*). Thus, the conceptual awareness of something to be a jewel amounts to a piece of knowledge when it has the capacity to lead us to an object that would not belie the fact of its being designated by 'jewel'. According to Buddhism, a construction with the help of concepts is always propelled by our desires and drives for pleasures etc. Hence by definition it would be a distortion of reality. We construe reality as we would ardently desire it to be, not as it actually is. But sometimes such construction lives up to our expectation, i.e. it does not 'fail' us, and hence it amounts to knowledge (cf. *prāmāṇyaṃ vyavahāreṇa*, Dharmakīrti). In what follows (5.2) I shall develop the Buddhist position on 'self-awareness' depending mainly upon the texts of Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti. In this task it is also necessary to resolve some exegetical problems.

5.2 *Self-awareness*

If I am aware that something is the case it is generally assumed that I am also aware that I am aware that something is the case. The pre-theoretical assumption is that although we are generally aware of presumably an external object or non-mental fact or event we can also be aware of the mental events happening 'inside'. We can be aware of the awareness itself. But how? We have noted that regarding this matter three views are current among the Indian philosopers.

(i) We can say that an awareness is *reflexively* aware of itself (T_1 above) if it is self-aware or it reveals itself.

(ii) Let us say that one is *introspectively* aware of one's immediately preceding awareness (the Nyāya view and Murāri's view), provided we need a separate perceptual awareness to apprehend the immediately preceding awareness. I concede that this is not the usual meaning of 'introspection' but I recommend its use in this connection to distinguish this view from the previous view.

(iii) Lastly, let us say that one is *reflectively* aware that an awareness has arisen in one's mind (the Bhāṭṭa view), provided one needs

[6] See introductory comments in Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabindu*.

an inference ('since I am aware of this object, there must have arisen an awareness in me') to be aware of one's awareness. Here too, I recommend the use of the word 'reflection' in this special sense, i.e. in the sense of an inference of the kind just described. This stipulated meaning of the adverb 'reflectively', it is hoped, will distinguish the present theory from the other two theories. (Reflexivity of awareness is thus different from the reflection (in the stipulated sense) upon the awareness.)

Diṅnāga gave three succinct arguments in favour of his doctrine of 'self-awareness' (*sva-saṃvedana*), where an awareness is *reflexively* aware of itself. Dharmakīrti added some more to strengthen the Buddhist view. Before we discuss these arguments we should deal with one exegetical problem in Diṅnāga's text. In the Buddhist view, self-awareness is a sort of 'mental' perception.[7] Diṅnāga talked about two kinds of mental perception—one kind presumably cognizes *rūpa* or material form while the other cognizes 'inner' events, desire, anger, pleasure, pain, etc. Diṅnāga's own passage is enigmatic here. I shall follow M. Hattori who followed Dharmakīrti in interpreting this passage. (Diṅnāga's cryptic statement here has created a great deal of confusion among the later commentators. Recently M. Nagatomi called it 'a conundrum in the Buddhist pramāṇa system'.)[8]

The exegetical problem lies with the above-mentioned first variety of 'mental' perception. The second variety is more or less recognizable as a variety of perception (in the sense defined) and generally accepted by the commentators without question. It is called *sva-saṃvedana*, 'self-awareness', i.e. the self-luminous character of all mental events, beginning from human passion to the Buddha's compassion. But how can an external object, such as colour, be apprehended by a mental perception and be at the same time, as the requirement demands, non-conceptual or unconceptualizable? (For Diṅnāga defined perception as necessarily non-conceptual, unconceptualizable.) Some commentators believe that Diṅnāga had to talk about a 'mental' perception which is on a par with the five kinds of sense-perception in order to be faithful to the tradition of the Buddhist scriptures!

The Buddha apparently mentioned a variety of awareness called 'mental awareness' (*manovijñāna*), side by side with the other five types

[7] Diṅnāga, '*Mānasaṃ cārtharāgādi sva-saṃvittir akalpikā*', see M. Hattori, pp. 92–4. *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, ch. I, verse 6ab.

[8] M. Nagatomi, pp. 243–60.

of sensory awareness. Thus Mokṣākara-gupta[9] quoted a saying of the Buddha ('Colour-form is cognized, oh monks, by twofold cognition, the visual perception and mental perception induced by it') in order to justify his contention that although the mental perception of colour is not commonly experienced by ordinary people, it might well have been the case with the Buddha's experience.

Nagatomi argues that Diṅnāga in the passage referred to did not talk about two types of mental perception but only about one type with a twofold aspect. If this means that the event called mental perception is identical with the self-awareness part of each mental event, then I readily accept the interpretation. Dharmakīrti explicitly stated in the *Nyāyabindu* that all mental events (*citta* = 'a cognitive event' as well as *caitta* = 'derivatives of the cognitive event', pleasure etc.) are self-cognizant.[10] It is possible that Diṅnāga only referred to the twofold appearance of the self-cognitive part of the event: the object-appearance (that aspect of a mental occurrence which makes an intentional reference) and the appearance of the cognition itself (the cognizing aspect). Since pleasure, pain, passion, anger, etc. are also cognitive in character according to the standard Buddhist view and by the same token self-cognizant, Diṅnāga might well have intended to emphasize the double feature that self-awareness of such events captures, the object-aspect as well as their 'own' aspect.

Each mental event in this theory has a perceptual character and this includes any cognitive event, sensory perception, inference, conceptual judgement, etc. It is the self-awareness of such events. Self-awareness is a kind of perception because it is a mental awareness that is entirely free from conception and construction. It forces itself into a non-mediated (non-conceptual) grasp of itself. It is called 'mental' or 'inner' because the external sense-faculties are not directly responsible for such a non-mediated grasp of itself (Diṅnāga: '*indriyānapekṣatvāt*'). Suppose I now close my eyes and think of my beloved. My thoughts will be invariably attended with passion, etc. (the *caitta*). This particular mental event is certainly not free from conceptual construction for only an *idea*, a concept, of my beloved, and not she herself, is grasped by my awareness. But my awareness itself as well as my passion or other emotive experience is self-aware. Thus self-awareness of any mental event is conception-free and hence a 'perception', according to Diṅnāga. He says: 'Even conception (or a conceptual

[9] Mokṣākara-gupta, ch. I, 6.1 (see Y. Kajiyama, pp. 45–7).
[10] Nyāyabindu, I.10.

judgement) is admitted to be (a sort of perception) as far as its self-awareness is concerned. It is not (a perception) with regard to its object because it indulges in conceptualization.'[11]

Diṅnāga repeatedly insists in the first chapter of his *Pramāṇasamuccaya* upon the dual aspect of each cognitive event: the object-aspect and the cognizing aspect (*arthābhāsa* and *svābhāsa*), more commonly known in the Yogācāra system as the apprehensible-form (*grāhyākāra*) and the apprehension-form (*grāhakākāra*). Later on this *arthābhāsa* transpired as *arthākāra*, the 'object-form' of the cognition, in the writings of the post-Diṅnāga exponents and hence the nickname *Sākāra-vādin* (*sākāra* = 'awareness with an object-form') was given to this school.[12] If the object-appearance is an inherent feature of each awareness-event and particular object-appearances ('blue', 'yellow', 'hard', 'round', etc.) are distinguishing marks for particular events, then the claim (of the Sautrāntika) that external objects are causally responsible for the arising of the object-appearances or object-likenesses (*sārūpya*) seems to dwindle. This position became very suitable for the Yogācāra school to which Diṅnāga belonged. For instead of saying with the old Yogācārins that the external objects do not exist, for nothing but consciousness (awareness) exists, one can now say with the exponents of the Diṅnāga school that in their theory of awareness and mental phenomena in general, references to external objects are dispensable.

Diṅnāga advanced some arguments to show that an awareness has always a twofold appearance and later added that even self-awareness of an awareness is proven thereby. Thus it has been said (I follow Hattori's translation):

The cognition that cognizes the object, a thing of colour, etc. has (a twofold appearance, namely,) the appearance of the object and the appearance of itself (as subject). But the cognition which cognizes this cognition of the object has (on the one hand) the appearance of that cognition which is in conformity with the object and (on the other hand) the appearance of itself. Otherwise, if the

[11] '*Kalpanāpi svasaṃvittav iṣṭā nārthe vikalpanāt*', *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, ch. I, verse 7ab. See M. Hattori, p. 27.

[12] According to Abhinavagupta, for example, if we change from the *pratibhāsa* or *ābhāsa* vocabulary to the *ākāra* vocabulary we move thereby from the Sautrāntika representationalism to Yogācāra idealism. We may analyse a cognition of blue *either* as a cognition in which there is a 'representation' or appearance of blue *or* as a cognition that has, or is characterized by, a blue-form. Notice that in the latter case the said blue-form becomes intrinsic to the particular awareness and not a representation of anything outside and not contributed by anything external. Diṅnāga's term, *ābhāsa*, was perhaps neutral and non-committal! See Abhinavagupta, vol. I, p. 144.

cognition of the object had only the form of the object, or if it had only the form of itself, then the cognition of cognition would be indistinguishable from the cognition of the object.[13]

To explain: let '*e*' stand for a cognitive event which can be described as my awareness of blue. We can distinguish between its two aspects, the blue-aspect and the cognition-aspect, of which the latter grasps the former; if the same event has also self-awareness, then this self-awareness aspect is to be distinguished from the cognition-aspect in that the self-awareness aspect picks out the cognition-aspect as marked or qualified by the blue-aspect while the cognition-aspect picks out the blue-aspect only. Now if instead of the dual aspect, my awareness had only one aspect, either the blue-aspect or the cognition-aspect, then the awareness of the awareness, the self-awareness, would be indistinguishable from the awareness itself. How? Suppose the cognition has only the blue-aspect for its object and another awareness, i.e. self-awareness, is taking also the blue-aspect for its object. This will collapse the distinction between awareness and self-awareness. If on the other hand the cognition has only the cognizing aspect (no object-aspect), then also the distinction between awareness and self-awareness will collapse. For both will be marked by the same cognizing aspect.[14]

Further, it is argued by Diṅnāga, there is another fact that can be happily explained under the assumption of the dual aspect of a cognitive event. Sometimes an object cognized by a preceding cognition appears in a succeeding cognition. But this would seem impossible since the objects are, according to the Sautrāntika Buddhists, in perpetual flux and therefore the object ceases to exist when the succeeding cognition arises. But our acceptance of the dual aspect may save the situation here. For we can say that at moment t_1 there arises a cognitive event, e_1, which grasps the blue, b_1, as its object (presumably b_1 being there at t_0); and at t_2, c_2 arises and grasps not b_1 but c_1 as an event which has the dual appearance. This will show that c_1 grasps 'the b_1-appearance' of c_1, which is part of its dual appearance (it does not grasp b_1 directly). For b_1 being in a state of flux cannot be present at t_1. This argument provides an explanation of the common-sense belief that an object grasped in a cognition can be grasped by several succeeding cognitive events, but it is not clear whether it accomplishes anything else.

[13] M. Hattori, pp. 29–30.

[14] Ibid., p. 30.

Diṅnāga gives next his major argument. Our recollection is not only of the object previously cognized but also of the previous cognition itself. This proves not only that a cognitive event has a dual aspect but also that it is self-cognized. For 'it is unheard of', says Diṅnāga, 'to have recollection of something without having experienced (it before)'. If as the Naiyāyika claims a cognition is cognized by a separate cognitive event, then, says Diṅnāga, an infinite regression would result and there would be no movement of thought (cognition) from one object to another.[15]

5.3 *Must I be Aware that I am Aware?*

Must I be aware that I am aware? We have seen that Nyāya holds a view (T_4 above) which answers it in the negative. A cognition may arise in a subject and remain uncognized by the subject! We may now see how Nyāya expounded this thesis. Various twists and turns of the Nyāya argument are to be found in the writings of all the major exponents of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school. It would be difficult to reproduce them here. I shall nevertheless attempt to give a synopsis using mainly such authors as Vācaspati, Udayana, and Bhāsarvajña. The Buddhist counter-criticisms of the Nyāya position are to be gleaned from Dharmakīrti, Prajñākara, and Śāntarakṣita. Gaṅgeśa, coming at the end of the Buddhist period, reformulated the Nyāya position in a defensible form which answered some of these criticisms. As against the three main arguments of Diṅnāga, the following Nyāya answers may be noted. (i) First, it must be underlined that the argument based upon memory (i.e. there cannot be our memory of an awareness-event unless there has been an awareness of that awareness-event) is non-committal. For it does not entail that a cognition has to be self-cognized. It requires that a cognition be cognized. (ii) Second, the so-called 'infinite-regress' argument can be easily answered if we accept T_4. It is necessary that a cognition cognizes an object, but it is only contingent that we have a cognition of cognition. Some cognitions (e.g. a cognition of cognition) may simply arise and be not cognized for the mind may be forced into a different activity. I will come back to this point at the end. (iii) The third point of Diṅnāga (that there would not be any movement of thought from one to other) can accordingly be answered. It is clear here that Nyāya can answer these points if it can consistently hold the thesis, T_4.

[15] Ibid., pp. 30–1. (Sanskrit verses 11cd and 12.)

Dharmakīrti's arguments to support 'self-awareness' are essentially tied to the Yogācāra thesis that the distinction between the *grāhya* 'apprehensible object' and the *grāhaka* 'apprehending cognition' is an illusion like that of a double vision of the moon. An awareness-event is an indivisable whole, it illuminates itself, for there is nothing else, the two appearances, the object-form and the apprehension-form, being illusorily created.[16] The non-difference of the apprehensible object and the apprehending subject (the cognition itself) is established by the *hetu*, i.e. on the evidence that these two are always, invariably, and necessarily apprehended together. Hence their difference is only a convenient myth, a matter of convention only. The self-cognition of a cognition is established because even the perception of an object cannot be otherwise established for him who does not have the perception of that perception.[17]

This 'idealistic' argument of Dharmakīrti led to a vortex of controversy in the post-Dharmakīrti period. Of many counter-arguments to refute idealism, I can mention only one or two from the texts of the Nyāya authors. Bhāsarvajña[18] says, among other things, that even memory can grasp the apprehensible object only or the fact experienced, not necessarily the *experience* of such fact or object. For example, I may say, 'I remember I obeyed my parents.' It would be odd to say 'I remember that I experienced obeying my parents.' Therefore there is no *niyama* or necessity that the object and its experience are always cognized together. In order to be remembered an object must be experienced prior to it but it is not necessary that such experience is also to be experienced, perceived, or cognized prior to it. Thus, we may fall back upon T_4 which asserts that a cognition need not always be cognized.

The Buddhist may argue that such remembering also remembers the experience itself, for when I am asked how do I remember my obedience to parents I would answer, 'Well, I had seen myself being obedient to them.' Bhāsarvajña replies that this answer may not necessarily be based upon my previous *perception* of the experience but a *present inference* (viz. that such experience must have occurred since I remember the fact experienced) would just as well account for the answer. Even the Buddhist would allow similar tacit inferences to explain other facts about memory. For example, I say 'I remember

[16] Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*, Pratyakṣa chapter, verse 328.
[17] Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇaviniścaya* (ed. T. Vetter) I, verse 55.
[18] Bhāsarvajña, pp. 136–7.

seeing John.' This is obviously based upon my non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa*) perception of the particular person, John. But that perceptual experience had for its object the particular, John; it did not include the name 'John'. In my report of the memory, however, I invariably use the name 'John' because I make a tacit inference: since the particular was later called John in my conceptual judgement, I can say 'I remember *seeing* John.'

Udayana has countered from the Nyāya point of view that there is no awareness that does not grasp the apprehensible object as different or distinct (*na grāhya-bhedam avadhūya dhiyo 'sti vṛttiḥ*)[19] and the Buddhist would have to argue for a thesis of universal delusion in order to establish that such awareness registering the difference of the apprehensible object has to be always erroneous. One may falsely cognize something provided there is some standard against which such truth and falsity would be judged. The thesis of universal delusion seems to ignore such a standard. In dreams or double-moon visions, our awareness registers a duality which is recognized as false, for an argument can be given to show that unity in such cases is real and duality or difference is only apparent. But in our ordinary perceptions, such an argument is not forthcoming to reveal unity (between *grāhya* and *grāhaka*) instead of duality (*bheda*). And if such non-duality (*grāhya-grāhaka-vaidhurya*) cannot be established, Dharmakīrti's argument for self-awareness is considerably weakened.

Dharmakīrti also appealed to the sensation of pain, pleasure, anger, etc. that are invariably occurrent with our cognitive state, and hence cognitive in character. The idea is that they are also self-cognized. For how can one say, 'My head aches, but I am not aware of it'? Similarly a cognition must be cognized by itself as soon as it arises. Udayana in reply has said that pain, pleasure, anger, etc. are certainly cognized as soon as they arise, but this is because of their characteristic intensity (*tīvra-saṃvegitā*).[20] It is a contingent fact. But only some cases of cognition are *intense* enough to be perceived as soon as they arise. Some may be feeble and pass away unnoticed.

One may argue that if a cognition is not self-cognized, it loses its essential nature, illuminatorship (*prakāśakatā*). To depend upon other for illumination or revelation is a shared property of all unconscious, inert (*jaḍa*) objects such as a piece of stone. If an awareness, which is a form of consciousness, becomes also so dependent for its illumination

[19] Udayana, *Ātmatattvaviveka*, p. 230.
[20] Udayana, *Nyāyavārttikatātparya-pariśuddhi* (Bibliotheca Ind.), p. 121.

then the distinction between consciousness and the unconscious matter vanishes.[21] The Nyāya says in reply that the essential nature of cognition is not self-illumination but 'illumination' of others, its objects. The unconscious matter does not have this characteristic and hence is easily distinguishable.

Prajñākara[22] has said in his defence of the Buddhist view (p. 353): Let there be three kinds of entity, some are extremely inert and hence have two illuminators or apprehenders, the lamp light and the visual organ (e.g. a pot); some need only one illuminator, the visual organ only (e.g. the lamp), and some are even better, for they are self-illuminator, that is, do not need any illuminator other than itself (e.g. an awareness). Bhāsarvajña replies as a Naiyāyika that the reason (*hetu*) in this argument of Prajñākara suffers from the fault of *asiddhi* (non-confirmation), for it is the self-cognizant nature of cognition which is in question here, but Prajñākara assumes this unproven fact and adduces it as a reason to establish that all cognitive states are self-illuminative.[23]

In a similar way the Nyāya can answer Śāntarakṣita[24] who re-defines 'self-awareness' from the Buddhist point of view as a combination of two factors: (i) a cognition does not depend upon anything else to make itself known or cognized, and (ii) it does not remain uncognized. The Nyāya would say that the first property here is again unproven and hence unestablished (*asiddhi*). We cannot assume it to prove 'self-awareness'.

The Nyāya view is that a cognition is generally cognized by another cognition, an inward perceptual experience called *anuvyavasāya* (T_2). Let me introduce a few arguments of Gaṅgeśa who defended this theory in order to replace the 'self-awareness' theory. The verbal report of a perceptual cognition takes the form, 'A pot' or 'This is a pot', but the verbal report of an *anuvyavasāya* takes the form, 'I see the pot' or I am aware that this is a pot'. These two awareness-events are numerically different but take place in quick succession, which generates the false notion that a cognition is automatically self-cognized.

The Prābhākara or the Buddhist might say that since we do speak about our cognitions and since such talk of a cognitive event presupposes our (prior) awareness of such an event, and since we must therefore concede cognition of cognition, there would be an economy

[21] Śāntarakṣita, *Tattvasamgraha*, verse 2020.
[22] Prajñākaragupta, p. 353.
[23] Bhāsarvajña, pp. 138–9.
[24] Śāntarakṣita, verse 2013.

(*lāghava*) of assumptions if we believe that a cognition is always self-cognized. Gaṅgeśa replies: No. This economy of assumptions is to be sacrificed for it infringes against the causal law of an external perceptual awareness. Suppose I see a pot. That pot is called here the object of such perception because it is also the locus or subjunct of the connection that the visual organ has with it and it is only such a faculty-and-object connection that generates such a perceptual awareness. The said awareness itself cannot be the locus, the subjunct of such a connection. A visual perception grasps the object to which the sense-organ is connected. A mental perception is another event that grasps the object to which the mind is connected. For lack of necessary perception-generating connection the visual perception cannot grasp, for example, the taste of the object seen. Similarly it (visual perception) cannot grasp the perception of the object either. Both are unconnected with the visual organ. In visually perceiving that a piece of sandalwood is fragrant, the fragrance is induced by memory and then presented to the object to which the visual organ is connected. But when a perceptual awareness arises it can then be connected with the 'inner' organ, mind and that will generate the *anuvyavasāya*, inward mental perception. To quote one among several *prayogas* of Gaṅgeśa: 'The visual awareness can not be the "object" of an awareness generated by the visual organ; since it is not presented through any perceptual connection by the visual organ, it is in this respect similar to a remote pot.'[25]

The opponent may point out to a couple of counter-examples where a cognition has itself as one of its objects: (a) our knowledge that all cognitive events are knowable includes this particular event as well in 'all cognitive events'; (b) God's knowledge (perception) must grasp also itself. Gaṅgeśa says that in the first there is a connection called *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti*. And in the second, God's knowledge has to be regarded as self-cognizant, but knowledge of the humans needs another perception to be known.

The infinite regress argument has already been answered by referring to T_4. But one might still argue: Since all the causal conditions for perceiving an awareness are present invariably why can it not always be perceived as soon as it arises? Gaṅgeśa says that certain opposite force (cf. *pratibandhaka*) may overwhelm such causal conditions. For example, pleasure, pain, search for pleasure, different

[25] Gaṅgeśa, vol. I, 1897, p.798.

interest etc. may render the causal conditions inert and hence no farther perception of perception arises.

One may argue that this is highly improbable. For if a man is aware at all of something without being aware that he is so aware then certainly something must be wrong with him, for it would be grossly inconsistent. But this oddity can be dispelled. Our uneasiness here lies in the fact that a person cannot claim or say that he is aware that *p* without his being aware that he is aware that *p*. But consider the following. How many times, looking at a child's behaviour, can we say that he is aware that *p* but not exactly aware that he is aware?

It is obviously true that we cannot recall what we have not cognitively experienced. Nyāya readily accepts this but goes on to point out that we do not recall everything that we have cognitively experienced. This does not always mean that my memory impression on such occasions has been lost. It may mean *occasionally* that I did not have a memory impression to begin with.

The general theory about memory impression is that a memory impression of a particular object is generated (no matter how 'faint' the impression may be) as soon as the object is cognitively experienced. (A hypnotist can evoke from us sometimes recollection of an object which we had normally taken to be not experienced at all!) But certainly we cannot recall what we have never experienced cognitively. This must be true of our awareness and other mental events when they play the role of the object of remembrance. Therefore, if under all possible provocation, I cannot recall that I had an awareness of (a perception of) an object, it is reasonable to assume that I did not have an awareness of that awareness of the object. It may be that I cannot remember that I had seen something at the moment I fell asleep, while an argument can be given to show that some seeing (perception) must have arisen at that moment, for I was awake, the lights were on, my eyes were open, etc. This will then prove that the presence of a cognitive event at a particular moment does not necessarily imply the presence of the awareness of that cognition. For I now understand by the force of the argument suggested, that I saw something at that moment. This understanding may not be remembering that I saw something. This is a present inference of a past awareness.

Nyāya argues that it is possible to remember many objects without our necessarily remembering that we had once experienced these objects. We may now surmise or 'see' that we had experienced cognitively those objects but this new awareness would not be a revival

(i.e. the memory-revival) of the previous cognition itself. It may be the memory-revival of simply the object cognized before! Such a state of affairs would be compatible with the view that we had experienced (cognitively) those objects but we did not have the awareness of this cognitive experience until now and for this reason we have been unable to recall it.

Another good argument in favour of T_4 is that it becomes necessary to save realism as well as our pre-theoretical assumption of the possibility of our knowledge of the external world from the attack of such idealists as Dharmakīrti. The usual counter-argument against Nyāya is this. If we admit that an awareness-event can occur in a person about which he is unaware, we make a mental event as good as a 'material object' (*jaḍa*), for both the mental and the material can exist unperceived or uncognized. This consequence leads to materialism. Nyāya will accept the charge, for otherwise mentalism or idealism would win the day! For the usual mentalistic strategy is to introduce an insurmountable barrier between the mental and the non-mental (material) and then claim that the mental (a cognitive event, a mode of consciousness) cannot be connected with the material object unless it transforms the latter into a mental object. This would therefore create what has sometimes been called the 'veil of ideas'. An argument can usually be developed to show eventually that this veil of ideas becomes in fact our veil of ignorance about the external, material world: if this is so, then, in our explanation of knowledge and awareness, a reference to the external world would seem to be dispensable.

The other argument of Dharmakīrti leads to almost the same conclusion. If the awareness of blue and the awareness of that awareness of blue necessarily arise together, and hence are ultimately indistinguishable, there is no way by which we can claim that the blue (the blue-form) in awareness is (or even corresponds to) a reality separate from the awareness itself. The causal theorists can easily be faulted and hence an idealistic explanation of knowledge and awareness will win the day. The philosophic motivation of Nyāya behind its thesis T_4 is to deny this possibility at the very beginning. T_4 is consistent with common sense, because it is possible for me to say that this baby is aware of the red flower before him but he is hardly aware that he is aware. Why does T_4 initially seem so odd? The answer is that we tend to confuse first-person statements (which are necessarily true) with third-person statements (which are only possible, that is, only sometimes true). I cannot say that I am aware

without my being aware that I am aware. But I can say of Mr X that he is sometimes aware without being aware that he is aware. Then I can argue that what is true of Mr X should be true of me, viz. that I could be aware without being aware that I am aware, although I cannot say that I am aware without being aware that I am aware. For saying it (a sort of *vyavahāra*, to use the Sanskrit term) presupposes first my being aware of the awareness of it.

5·4 Nyāya View about Knowing that One Knows

Gilbert Ryle[26] once criticized the platitude of many traditional (Western) philosophers who held knowledge of knowledge to be virtually equivalent to knowledge *simpliciter*. The platitude is based upon what Ryle has called 'argument from introspection'. Ryle claimed this argument to be false and hence rejected the platitude or the thesis that knowledge of knowledge is virtually equivalent to knowledge *simpliciter*. Most Indian philosophers entertained a very similar view about knowledge of knowledge. Nyāya rejects this view in unequivocal terms albeit on different grounds and propounds a theory which may not be acceptable to a follower of Ryle. Translated in terms of episodic notion of knowledge, the Nyāya view means that the episode of knowledge in a person is non-identical with the episode of knowing that knowledge, for what leads to the former is not identical with what leads to the latter episode.

In fact according to Nyāya and other philosophers in India two different issues are generally conflated in the discussion of knowledge of knowledge. The first concerns the *utpatti* or 'arising' of knowledge-hood of knowledge while the second concerns the *jñapti* or 'knowing' of the knowledge. Regarding the first Nyāya says that the two episodes are separable for their causal conditions are non-identical. Regarding the second, Nyāya says that knowledge of knowledge must be separated from knowledge of that same awareness as a simple awareness, for the first involves knowledge of the knowledge-hood (or truth) of the said awareness while the second involves knowledge of the awareness as mere awareness. To explain: let us suppose a non-dubious awareness arises in the subject and it happens to be true although the subject may be *unaware* of its truth. According to the Nyāya conception of knowledge (*pramā*) the subject's awareness in this case has the character, knowledge-hood, i.e. it is a piece of knowledge. Now the

[26] G. Ryle (1949), pp. 156–60.

Nyāya says that the subject's knowledge of this awareness (that he has a non-dubious awareness) does not amount to his knowledge of its knowledge-hood. The subject may know that he is aware with certainty that *p* but he would not know that he knows that *p* unless some further evidence is adduced (e.g. successful behaviour, conformity with proven facts). Knowledge of knowledge in this theory is actually an inference while knowledge *simpliciter* is simply a true and non-dubious awareness. Such a notion of knowledge *simpliciter* is however different from the commonly accepted notion of knowledge in the Western tradition.

The thesis of non-identity of knowledge of knowledge and knowledge *simpliciter* seems to go against the new 'formal' proof offered by J. Hintikka in defence of the thesis that '*a* knows that *p*' virtually implies '*a* knows that he knows that *p*'. But I do not think that there is any conflict here as far as the 'formal' proof of Hintikka is concerned. Hintikka sharpens the notion of knowledge well enough and makes several assumptions in order to make his thesis almost irresistible. In fact, his basic assumption is the condition C.K.K.*, which is based upon the rule A.PKK*, and the equivalence of knowledge of knowledge with knowledge *simpliciter* really turns on this assumption. But the infallibility of this rule may be disputed. Hintikka himself is quite aware of the problems involved here. He also requires, for his thesis to obtain, that the person referred to by *a* in '*a* knows that' knows that he is referred to by it.[27]

E. J. Lemmon once clearly rejected the thesis that maintains that '*a* knows that' implies 'a knows that he knows that'. He said: 'there is a clear sense in which it is untrue: there are many things people know without realizing that they know them'.[28] It is important to realize that Lemmon disagreed with the view (which Hintikka later defended) even without developing a sense of knowledge that may be identical with that of Nyāya. The upshot is that one cannot deductively prove that knowledge *simpliciter* is equivalent to knowledge of knowledge, unless one prefixes the notion of knowledge so as to make the thesis irresistible. And this is what Hintikka has apparently done. The insight that we may derive from Lemmon's disagreement would be that in some acceptable sense of knowing, very little of the kind of epistemic logic (that Hintikka envisioned) would be forthcoming.

It is true that we have sharpened the notion of knowledge to suit the

[27] J. Hintikka (1962), pp. 106–10. For rule A.PKK* and condition C.KK*, see pp. 17 and 43 respectively.

[28] E. J. Lemmon, p. 38.

Nyāya sense of *pramā*. But I think this use of 'know' is not entirely counter-intuitive. Besides, this stipulative use has the following advantage. It is easy in this way to separate knowledge of knowledge from knowledge *simpliciter*. Knowledge of knowledge again is not in this view simply another act of 'self-observation' but an inference based upon evidence. This allows us to say that a subject *knows* as long as he has a non-dubious awareness (a certainty) and it happens to be true, but a subject *knows that he knows* only when he inferred its truth or knowledge-hood from adequate evidence. In the Gettier cases, we can say from this point of view that the subject *knows* (in this special sense) provided he has a certitude (justified or not) which also happens to be true, and that he does not *know that he knows* for he inferred its knowledge-hood from wrong evidence (he has wrongly inferred). (See also Chapter 4.) The Nyāya theory seems to require that in order to assert that *p* or to talk about what one knows the subject must not only be aware that *p* but he should also know that he is so aware. But I wish to repeat the points I have already noted (previous section). The fact that a subject remembers that *p* presupposes his prior knowledge (or awareness) that *p*, not necessarily his knowledge of that knowledge or awareness. Naturally when a person remembers something it becomes immediately obvious to him (that is, he immediately presumes or *infers*) that he must have been aware of whatever he remembers now. But this present (inferred) knowledge of his previous awareness is not equivalent to his knowledge of the awareness-event which usually follows the (first) arising of the awareness (or knowledge). The subject may of course remember that he knew that *p* in which case he not only knew before that *p* but also knew that he knew that *p*. But the point is that sometimes we remember simply what we knew before and not automatically the fact that we knew it.

In the light of the points mentioned above, some comments on E. J. Lemmon's example may be in order. Lemmon says that if he suddenly remembered an obscure fact about Persian history which he had learned as a child, it would be said that he knew this fact; but until he remembered it, he did not know that he knew it. This is misleading. Lemmon is obviously against taking knowledge to be episodic ('current action', in his language), as Nyāya would like to have it. But in spite of this difference, the following Nyāya observation is possible. Nyāya would say that it all depends upon what exactly Lemmon remembered. If he remembered simply that obscure fact about Persian history, then he is only justified in assuming that he knew it before. But if he

remembered that he learned (knew) it in his Persian history class, as is often the case, then he would be justified in assuming, as we would be to assume about him, that he knew that he knew it (when he learned it). In fact Lemmon's example is unfortunate from this point of view, for learning in the class is very often the case of knowing that one knows (in the Nyāya sense of the term). Thus unless one so defines knowledge as to make it analytically true that knowledge *simpliciter* implies knowledge of knowledge, it would always be possible to say of somebody that he knew that *p*, although he did not know at that moment that he knew that *p*. Thus, much of the Nyāya thesis may very well be defended.

Our criticism of Hintikka here may appear to be too hasty. For, after all, Hintikka constructed a 'formal proof'. But it is rather refreshing to note that we are not alone in rejecting the second part of the Hintikka thesis. Among modern philosophers, A. C. Danto has very convincingly argued that the above part of Hintikka's theory (or that of Schopenhauer whom Hintikka cites as a predecessor in upholding it) is false, provided Hintikka by his use of the verb 'to know' intends to capture usage. In short, Danto points out, by using what he calls his 'style of grosso-modo proof', that the conjunction of '*a* knows that *p*' and '*a* does not know that *a* knows that *p*' is not inconsistent.[29]

The main argument of Danto is that '*a* knows that *a* knows that *p*' has a truth-condition in excess of the truth-conditions for '*a* knows that *p*', and 'in such a way that the full satisfaction of the truth-conditions of the latter leaves indeterminate whether the excess truth-condition of the former is satisfied'. It is thus possible to hold that the former could be false while the latter is true. Danto explains this point as follows: We can take the notion of 'understands the sentence *p*' as giving a truth-condition for 'knows that *p*'. Thus the former would require that *a* understands the sentence '*a* knows that *p*' while the latter simply that *a* understands the sentence *p*. Danto further comments: 'And surely it is possible to understand a great many things without understanding what knowledge is, or what "knows that" means'.[30] All this goes to support the Nyāya view against Hintikka and the Mīmāṃsakas of India. But we should also note that Danto does not contribute to the episodic conception of knowledge as Nyāya does. And this might explain the fact that Danto reaches a conclusion similar to Nyāya against Hintikka through a slightly different route.

[29] A. C. Danto, pp. 100–3. [30] Ibid., p. 101.

Presumably Danto would be reluctant to accept the Nyāya notion of knowledge (as distinct from knowledge of knowledge) as a non-dubious, truth-hitting cognition!

The Nyāya view of knowledge of knowledge, or rather knowledge of the knowledge-hood of an awareness, is that it is derived by an inference. What kind of inference would it be? A rich variety of material is available on this matter. The overall picture becomes very complicated as the Nyāya exponents proceed to explain the nature of such inference as would establish the knowledge-hood of an awareness. I shall use mainly Vācaspati and Udayana in this section, and in the next section which will continue to sort out the problems that arise in this connection I shall mainly depend upon Gaṅgeśa and Vardhamāna.

Vācaspati expounds the Nyāya view by introducing distinction between different kinds of knowledge.[31] It is argued that different kinds of inference would be needed to ascertain the knowledge-hood of different kinds of knowledge. The question is also raised whether or not we need to ascertain the knowledge-hood of every piece of knowledge. For unless we can answer it we cannot satisfy a Nāgārjunian sceptic. First we should distinguish the scriptural matters from mundane matters for scriptures are different kinds of action-guide. Concentrating upon 'mundane' matters, we should notice the following: the 'mundane' matters of our acquaintance may be classified as those with which one has acquired familiarity (e.g. daily chores) and those with which one has not (cf. *anabhyāsadaśāpanna*). My familiarity with a cup of tea in the morning, or that there is a cup of tea on the table, belongs to the first case. My perception of an unfamiliar man approaching me would belong to the second type. Vācaspati says that in both cases the truth of my awareness is known to me by an inference, but the nature of the inference varies substantially one from the other. In the second case I know that my perception has been veridical (that I am not under illusion) because it leads to confirmatory behaviour (*pravṛtti-sāmarthya*). For example, I can go and talk to the man; and his behaviour that follows, if confirmatory, would allow me to infer: this perception has been a case of knowledge, for it has led to confirmatory behaviour. It may be argued that no ostensible behaviour is likely to follow unless the perception has been a case of knowledge. Hence the said inference will never arise unless it presupposes what it

[31] Vācaspati (Thakur's edn.), p. 29.

is supposed to prove. Nyāya makes room for this common intuition, but proposes to resolve the issue differently. A perceptual awareness, whose verdicality is in doubt or unestablished (*sandigdha-prāmāṇyaka* or *agṛhīta-prāmāṇyaka*) is as good as a dubious cognitive awareness (*saṃśaya*). But even a dubiety, Nyāya asserts, may prompt us to act, and such action can very well be crowned with success. In such cases, Nyāya says, we infer the knowledge-hood of the awareness on the basis of some 'confirmatory behaviour' as evidence. Behaviour, here, includes activities. Vācaspati has said that our actions and awarenesses (beliefs?) are (causally) related in the following way:

> Action or propensity to act depends upon the awareness of the object (*artha*), not upon the certain determination of it; for intelligent people act even from a dubious cognitive awareness of the object. It is not that those who act even being certain that the means will bring about an end (e.g. farmers ploughing fields for future crops) do not entertain (occasional) doubt about the result that is yet to come'.[32]

The point is that even if we do not as yet have the knowledge that my present perception is veridical (or that it yields knowledge), my present perception, whose knowledge-yielding character (truth-hitting character) has not yet been determined, can all the same initiate action or behaviour that may be confirmatory in the end. Udayana says elaborating the Nyāya view: 'Everywhere, one tends to act, having considered that there is more to gain by acting, and that even if the result is not confirmatory, the loss is less (than gain).' (I follow Vardhamāna's interpretation.)[33]

Evidence of confirmatory behaviour is not always needed to establish knowledge-hood. In the cases where the matters are sufficiently 'familiar', another type of inference is used to establish the truth of an awareness. Vācaspati calls it the '*tajjātīyatā*' inference. I shall call it 'inference from likeness'. Briefly, it is this. Every time that I am in the kitchen in the morning, I see a cup of tea on the table. In order to know that my perception that there is a cup of tea on the table is veridical in such cases, I do not always need confirmatory behaviour (I go and take it in my hand, drink it, etc.). Rather I infer then and there that the perception that there is a cup of tea on the table is veridical (knowledge-yielding), for it belongs to the same type, i.e. it is

[32] Ibid., p. 29.
[33] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 95. For Vardhamāna's comment see Bibliotheca Indica edn., pp. 100–1.

like others, many others, I have had before. In such cases therefore our action or tendency to act (or our behaviour) is prompted by a certainty about the object, for we already know that this perception is veridical. This explains our strong common-sense intuition that in many cases we act on the basis of a dead certainty about an object. This is admittedly an inference based upon a premise involving the rather intriguing notion of *likeness*. It says that if A and the likes of A have been proven before to have the property K, then if X is like A (in essential points), X has K.

Udayana discussed this intriguing notion of *likeness*.[34] Briefly, the 'likeness' varies with each type of cognitive structure. Besides, one sort of 'likeness' would be emphasized in the case of perception, another for the case of inference. Basically, the idea is this. On the first occasion, my awareness, 'there is a cup of tea on the table' (suppose on the first day) was no doubt a piece of knowledge, but I did not know immediately about its being a piece of knowledge until confirmatory behaviour proved it to be so. After some days, however, I would start knowing its knowledge-hood immediately after I see the cup of tea. I would infer its knowledge-hood on the basis of its *likeness* to my past veridical experience. The *likeness* is also based, in this case, upon the identical structural content of the previous experience and the present experience.

Udayana says that all of us have an inherent propensity to wish and look for knowledge (cf. *samutkaṭa-vāsanā*).[35] We do not usually wish for or search after falsities. But the fact is that a cognitive event only occasionally amounts to knowledge. As a result we frequently take (mistake) a false awareness to be a case of knowledge. A man, for example (Udayana's example), can assume the appearance of a wandering monk and we would quickly (*jhaṭiti*) take him to be a monk but we cannot say that we *know* in such cases unless we also know whether the appearance is faked or not. For a doubt as to whether or not the appearance was genuine would arise and be overwhelming (*āskandita*). This is what Vācaspati called an 'unfamiliar' situation. In such cases, an awareness may arise and be also apprehended but it is commonly felt nevertheless that an overwhelming doubt regarding the knowledge-hood of such awareness would also arise within a short period (say, in the second or third moment). This fact cannot be easily

[34] Ibid. (Bibliotheca Indica edn.), p. 102. See also J. N. Mohanty (1966), pp. 53–4.
[35] Udayana, ibid. (Bibliotheca Indica edn.), p. 49.

explained if we supposed that when a person knows that he is aware of something he *ipso facto* knows that he *knows*.

Knowledge of the awareness commonly arises even when the knowledge-hood of the awareness becomes dubious in the above manner. For, Udayana says, knowledge-hood is a property of the awareness and in order to doubt whether the said awareness has knowledge-hood or not one must know at least that this is an awareness *simpliciter*. Doubt regarding the qualifying characters, A-ness or the lack of it, A-ness or B-ness (when they are contrary properties), presupposes knowledge of the subject-entity (*dharmin*). This is called in Nyāya the *dharmi-jñāna*, requirement of a doubt. If somebody doubts whether an object is a camel or a kangeroo, he must have some acquaintance (at least a visual experience from a distance) with the object itself. As I have already noted (Chapter 4.1), we need 'fixed' pegs to hang our doubts upon.

Just as the distinction between an awareness and perception of that awareness has been emphasized by contrasting the 'first-person singular' statements with the 'third-person singular' ones, a similar point can be made here. The statement 'I know that *p* but I do not know that I know' is plainly absurd, but '*a* knows that *p* but he does not know that he knows' is not necessarily so. To sum up: according to Nyāya, in the cases of perception as well as awareness derived from linguistic expression (*śabda*), knowledge-hood is established (known) by an inference based upon either 'confirmatory behaviour' or 'likeness' (according as it is an 'unfamiliar' or 'familiar' situation). But there seems to be a controversy among the Naiyāyikas (most probably initiated by Vācaspati) about the knowledge-hood of some other kinds of awareness, e.g. the kind of inference used here to determine knowledge-hood as well as the inward perception (*anuvyavasāya*) that apprehends another awareness. This leads us to the next section.

5.5 *Inference, Confirmation, and Introspection*

Gaṅgeśa has sorted out the Nyāya position as follows:

(1) Doubt is infectious. If *a* entertains a doubt regarding the knowledge-hood of his awareness that *p*, then *a*'s awareness becomes infected with doubt and this means that *a* cannot be sure whether *p*.

(2) Human action is not always prompted (i.e. caused) by knowledge. Thus *a* may act assuming that *p* even when he has simply an awareness that *p* (even when he cannot be sure).

(3) A person can be sure that p, only if he has a certitude (an awareness) that p and this awareness is not infected or overwhelmed with doubt as regards its falsehood. He does not always have to be sure by ascertaining the knowledge-hood of his awareness.

(4) One may say: if c_2 ascertains the knowledge-hood of c_1, we may need another c_3, to ascertain the knowledge-hood of c_2 and so on. This infinite regress can be stopped in the following way: If c_2 ascertains the knowledge-hood of c_1, and no doubt about the falsehood of c_2 arises, there is then no need to look for c_3 etc. to ascertain the knowledge-hood or otherwise of c_2.

(5) Actions, behaviour etc. are 'shaky' (*sakampa*) when they are prompted by dubious awareness. They are 'unshaken' (*niṣkampa*) when prompted by a certitude about p. Such certitude may arise because either no doubt regarding the falsehood of the awareness has arisen; or when such doubts arose, they were removed on the basis of evidence.

(6) In sum, action in us is not usually produced by knowledge of knowledge. A person acts because he knows (not because he knows that he knows) or he is simply aware, or he is in doubt but wishes to have the benefit of doubt, etc.

All these would apply to perceptual knowledge and they can be applied (as Vācaspati and Udayana have shown) *mutatis mutandis* to scriptural knowledge.[36] Three further cases remain to be examined: (i) general inferential knowledge, (ii) knowledge of the 'result' (*phala*), that ensures confirmatory behaviour, and (iii) inward perceptual recognition.

First, let us deal with inference. The sceptic, who is fond of the 'infinite regress' argument might say that if some inference is supposed to impart knowledge of the knowledge-hood of an awareness, we may need another inference to examine what the former inference is said to establish. Vācaspati answers this by saying that an inference properly made would be 'self-verifying' in nature. This cryptic statement of Vācaspati became a matter of controversy for the later Nyāya. Here again I am obliged to discuss some exegetical issues, for it has some obvious philosophical significance. The problem is, of course, whether or not the knowledge derived from sound inference should be accepted as indubitable according to Nyāya. Vācaspati says that an inference is 'properly made' if and only if it is based upon a reason or

[36] Vācaspati (Thakur's edn.), p. 29; Udayana, ibid., p. 99.

evidence (figuratively called the 'inferential mark') that is invariably connected or concomitant with the property that is to be inferred (*anumeyāvyabhicāriliṅga-samutthatvāt*). In other words, if invariable concomitance is guaranteed between A and B, then from A, we infer B, and in this nothing can go wrong. If inference follows this 'logical' rule, it imparts indubitable knowledge (*niṣkampam upapadyate jñānam*). For, the 'mark' is there (present), and the 'mark' cannot be present unless the 'marked' (the property to be inferred) is present.[37]

It is not clear whether the point of Vācaspati is that a logical (argument-like) inference is valid *a priori*, because the principle of such inference embodies a necessary truth. Perhaps this would be a *volte face* for a Naiyāyika. Vācaspati says that any inference, whether it is of the kind (described above) based upon the logical 'mark' called confirmatory behaviour or upon a logical 'mark' about which all kinds of doubt regarding its non-concomitance or deviation have been removed (*nirasta-samasta-vyabhicāra-śaṁkasya*), would impart knowledge and that knowledge-hood of such inferential cognition cannot be doubted.

Vācaspati's expression 'self-verifying' (*svata eva pramāṇa*) would, of course, mean that the knowledge-hood of such inferential awareness (conclusion) would be known by the same set of conditions that would generate knowledge of that awareness itself. According to Nyāya, each awareness is cognized by an inward perception. Therefore when an inferential awareness arises, an inward perception would grasp such an awareness as well as its knowledge-hood. In other words, when I have inferred that *p* I inwardly perceive that I have inferred that *p* and by the same token I inwardly perceive this inferred awareness to be a piece of knowledge—this is what Vācaspati intends to say.[38]

Udayana reformulates the matter and maintains that the lack of doubt regarding inferential knowledge is only a contingent factor. In the case of inference, i.e. inferential awareness, doubt may arise as regards its knowledge-hood in either of two ways. We may doubt the adequacy of the causal factors involved. Or we may doubt the knowledge-hood of the 'concluding' (resulting) awareness. Two relevant causal factors are involved: Knowledge of the concomitance (invariability) between A and B, and knowledge of the presence of A in the case under consideration (in *pakṣa*) on the basis of which we infer B. Now if these two pieces of knowledge are established (known),

[37] Ibid., pp. 29 and 97.

[38] Vardhamāna (Bibliotheca Indica edn.), p. 112.

Udayana says the first contingency, i.e. possibility of the first kind of doubt, is removed.

The second contingency is removed as follows. The inferred conclusion is 'B is there.' The relevant doubt would be of the form: whether this awareness is a piece of knowledge or not. This would, according to Nyāya, infect the conclusion and the awareness would then be virtually equivalent to a doubt of the form 'perhaps B is there, perhaps not.' But this latter doubt is, according to Nyāya theory, what actually initiates the process of inference. (It is technically called *pakṣatā*.) In other words, people infer generally in order to remove such a doubt and hence when inference has taken place (an awareness 'B is there' has arisen), the said doubt would have been removed already. Therefore, both types of doubt are removed in this way. Hence when the inward perception takes place to grasp the inferential awareness (when I know that I have inferred that B is there), it grasps also, in the absence of any possible doubt, the knowledge-hood of the said awareness. This means that we do not need a further inference in order to know the knowledge-hood of the inferred conclusion (awareness). (And this may be a good answer to a Nāgārjunian sceptic who talks about a vicious circle or an infinite regress.)

The position of Vācaspati (that inference is self-verifying) does not admittedly fit well with the rest of the Nyāya system. But I do not think it is entirely unsatisfactory. We should notice that the so-called 'self-verifying' character of an inference is not essentially the same as it is in the rival (Mīmāṃsā) schools. The Mīmāṃsā school seems to assume that knowledge-hood is the natural trait of an awareness-event (only 'faulty' causal factors give rise to the cases of 'faulty' awareness, falsehoods) and hence when the awareness is known, its knowledge-hood is also necessarily known along with it. For Vācaspati, however, the knowledge-hood of the inferential awareness is known only contingently along with the knowing (inward perception) of the awareness itself. It is insisted upon, for example, that this happens only when all the possible doubts are removed. Udayana has shown how such possible doubts can be removed (see above). In other words, inference is not said to be indubitable here on *a priori* grounds: what is appealed to is only a practical impossibility (cf. 'contradiction of practice' = *vyāghāta*) of raising any doubt.

Vardhamāna tries to explain the remarks of Udayana and Vācaspati as follows. He adds that the inward mental perception that grasps the inference, 'B is there', grasps it also as an inference. Since 'inference'

means an awareness derived from sound evidence or reason, our inward perception grasps the awareness as one derived from sound evidence. In Nyāya theory of inference, what is derived from sound evidence (*sallinga*) can never go wrong. As Vardhamāna insists: 'For, an inference produced by the "consideration" of (logically) sound evidence is never false or a pseudo-inference.'[39] If this is correct, then our knowledge of our own awareness as an inference would automatically be knowledge of its soundness, i.e. its knowledge-hood. This implies that the Nyāya theory of inference is computational and the mechanism of inference can never deliver false inference as output! The output could be a false awareness (a pseudo-inference) if only the input (the 'consideration' of evidence = *parāmarśa*) were false. If the input (the premiss or premisses) is not false but the conclusion is not really entailed by it, the Nyāya mechanism for inference would not generate any output, any inferential awareness. For it would reject the input and say, as it were, 'It does not compute'. In other words, while in the Western theory of inference one can draw a fallacious conclusion from some premiss (and hence we talk about 'logical fallacies' in such cases), one cannot *infer*, in the Nyāya sense of the term, using such a premiss as one's input or initial awareness. (See Chapter 4.)

In spite of the above explanations by Udayana (and Vardhamāna) later Naiyāyikas never felt happy about the above view of Vācaspati regarding inferences. While one can agree with the point that inference, properly made, is always true and hence a piece of knowledge (in other words, truth would arguably be its omnitemporal, but probably not its necessary, character) one cannot see why it would not be possible sometimes to raise doubts as regards the truth or knowledge-hood of some particular inference. Gaṅgeśa, Vardhamāna, *et al* think that such doubts can be entertained. And when they arise in us, a further inference is needed to resolve them. Hence Vācaspati's expression '*svata eva*' should actually be interpreted to mean 'with ease' ('*sukara eva*' in Vardhamāna). Vācaspati's cryptic comment would then mean, according to Gaṅgeśa, that the knowledge-hood of an inferential awareness is easily grasped. And this means that doubts as regards its falsehood are generally absent and hence there is 'unshaken' activity after inference. In other words, inference is not 'self-verifying' but verifiable only with excessive ease!

[39] 'Na hi salliṅgaparāmarśajānumitir ābhāsībhavatīty arthaḥ', Vardhamāna, ibid., p. 112. See also Gaṅgeśa, vol. I, pp. 283–4.

Vardhamāna suggests another alternative interpretation of Vācaspati. This 'self-verifying' nature does not apply, according to Vācaspati, to all types of inference, but only to the inference by which we infer the character of knowledge-hood in any other awareness. Hence the inference based upon confirmatory knowledge or *likeness* would be knowledge and knowledge-hood of such inference would be known as soon as that inferential awareness itself is known (by an *inward* mental perception). The ground would be almost the same as before: all doubts as regards this particular type of inference going wrong are removed and hence further doubt should not arise.[40]

We can now look more closely into the notion of confirmatory behaviour. The notion was first introduced in the Nyāya tradition by Vātsyāyana who also used it as the 'logical mark' to infer the knowledge-hood of an awareness. To explain it, Jayanta refers to the interpretation of some previous teacher or teachers (*ācāryaiḥ*), who say that confirmatory behaviour means another awareness that ensues upon the first or an awareness of the logical evidence to confirm the first awareness. The idea is that if I see a man approaching and later on shake hands with him, this second awareness of mine confirms the first. Or, the shaking of hands would be the logical mark, my awareness of which (*viśeṣa-darśana*) will establish that he is a man, which in turn would show that my perception was veridical. However, Jayanta rightly rejects such interpretation and says that Vātsyāyana meant by it a sort of confirmatory knowledge or confirmation by virtue of the 'effects' or 'result' expected of the object known (*arthakriyākhya-phalajñānam*). My perception that it is water there would be known to be veridical if, for example, it quenches my thirst. Awareness of the latter fact would be called *phalajñāna*, confirmatory knowledge—or knowledge of the 'result'.

The question now arises about how we know the knowledge-hood of the confirmatory knowledge, according to the Nyāya scheme. Here Jayanta differs from Vācaspati in resolving the issue. Vācaspati insists that cases of confirmatory knowledge are similar to that of 'familiar' situation, and hence an inference based upon *likeness* is needed to know its knowledge-hood. Jayanta says that confirmatory knowledge does not stand in need of verification. In other words, it goes against the invariable practice of all persons to raise doubt about the knowledge-hood of the confirmatory knowledge. Jayanta almost claims

[40] Vardhamāna, ibid.

that it is impossible to entertain a doubt here. For one thing, since my purpose has been served (*siddha-prayojanatvāt*), i.e. my thirst has been quenched, there is no necessity to examine or question the awareness any further. In other words, absence of any doubt accounts for the non-arising of the question whether it is a piece of knowledge or not. For, Jayanta says, how can I doubt whether I have a knowledge of water or not when I am already in the middle of water—taking a bath, for example? But this is only a practical impossibility, not a logical one. For one can easily imagine that it is all a dream, my thirst and the quenching of it etc. Assuming this objection, Jayanta says something that he himself repudiated in another connection. He says that the difference between dream experience and waking experience can be marked by our inward feeling (*saṃvedyatvāt*). 'Here I am awake, not dreaming'—an inner perception of this kind is concomitant with our waking experience.[41]

This, however, is a desperate attempt to get out of a tight corner. For Jayanta himself agrees (a few pages earlier) with the sceptic, as against the other Naiyāyikas and Mīmāṃsakas, that when a perception arises, there cannot be any ostensible mark that we are necessarily aware of, to help us decide whether it is veridical or not. He challenged his opponent to spell out such a specific mark as would unmistakably distinguish veridical perception from the non-veridical one. For it cannot be clarity or vividness (*spaṣṭatā-viśeṣa*, probably mentioned by Dharmakīrti in one connection), nor can it be unshakable disposition to act (*niṣkampatā*, Vācaspati refers to it), nor absence of any doubt, nor perceived absence of any contradiction, for all of them would equally and indiscriminately characterize both an illusion and veridical perception and, one may add, even a dream. Even if we concede Jayanta's point about dreaming and the presence of our 'inner' evidence in waking experience, it is quite possible to imagine a situation, following Vasubandhu, which is equivalent to that of mass hypnosis, or a Cartesian situation imagined to be created by an evil demon, or the case of a 'brain in a vat' as imagined recently by Hilary Putnam, where 'inner' evidence will not be of any help.[42] Jayanta however tries an alternative way to establish our knowledge of the knowledge-hood of the confirmatory knowledge. We become certain about the truth of the confirmatory knowledge only after a satisfactory examination of all its causal factors. This would therefore imply that

[41] Jayanta, pp. 158–9. [42] H. Putnam, pp. 1–21.

confirmatory knowledge may need verification on occasion. I can examine, for example, whether my eyesight is defective or not, whether I am excessively hungry (and therefore hallucinating those sumptuous dishes), whether I am dreaming or awake, and so on.

The opponent might say that we can in the same way engage ourselves in examining the causal factors to determine the veridicalness of the first perception for which confirmation was needed. Why do we have to resort to such a method in the second, confirmatory knowledge, and not in the first one? Jayanta answers that this is also possible but generally people resort to examining the confirmatory evidence rather than examining the causal factors of the first perception when it arises. If I see water, I immediately act to see whether it quenches my thirst (provided I am thirsty) and if it does, my first perception is confirmed to be a piece of knowledge. This is a much *easier* way than examining the causal factors of the first perception and people usually take the easier way out. To quote: 'If you find honey in your own home why should you go to the (distant) hill?' In sum, there is a practical solution to the sceptic's problems, but the super-sceptic can probably never be answered satisfactorily (see below).

In confirmatory knowledge, we in fact reach the end of the line. If the regress which the sceptic points out has to stop anywhere then it stops here. Moritz Schlick has commented about the nature of confirmations. 'They are an absolute end. In them the task of cognition at this point is fulfilled . . . it gives us a *joy* to reach them, even if we cannot *stand* upon them' (my emphasis).[43] Jayanta holds another view that coincides with that of the sceptic. He says that it is possible for all cases of our awareness to be considered as infected with doubt or uncertainty in the beginning (prior to confirmation etc.). For so long as the certainty about its knowledge-hood (or otherwise) has not arisen we can say that there is a lack of certainty as regards the truth of my awareness, although an actual doubt has not arisen. This lack of certainty transmits itself to the object of my awareness or 'infects' it. Hence there is a possibility of universal doubt in this extended sense of the term 'doubt'. Jayanta says that by 'doubt' here he would designate the lack of certainty which characterizes each awareness due to the lack of our knowledge about its truth.[44] The reason for conceding this

[43] M. Schlick (1959), pp. 209–27. See also J. N. Mohanty who quotes Schlick (1966), p. 52 n.

[44] Jayanta, p. 157.

position to the sceptic has already been explained. The Nyāya position that the knowledge-yielding character of an awareness cannot be known at the moment the awareness arises, may entail such a possibility of universal doubt. We will initially lack certainty about the truth of any awareness. Jayanta says clearly that he is not arguing for the establishment of the possibility of universal doubt but the Nyāya position might entail this possibility.[45] Each awareness, in other words, is suspect until proven not guilty.

Vācaspati, I have already noted, has a different view about the cases of confirmatory knowledge. He thinks that they should be treated in the same way as our perception of 'familiar matters' (*abhyāsadaśāpanna*) is treated. For they are, after all, 'familiar' through habit, repetition, practice etc. Hence our knowledge of the truth of the confirmation is given by the inference (of the kind described before) based upon '*likeness*' as the logical mark. Many times, for example, I drink water and thirst is quenched. Hence the 'instant' inference based upon *likeness* gives the required knowledge that the confirmatory awareness of the quenching of thirst is true or is a piece of knowledge. The former confirmatory awareness only reinforces the latter. But it is possible to reach a point when I am drinking water for the first time to quench my thirst (before now, suppose I drank only coke);[46] in that case the inference based upon *likeness* would not be available to me. Vācaspati anticipates this point and answers that in this case my tasting (drinking) of water belongs to the class of mundane objects or matters with which no 'familiarity' has been developed (*anabhyāsa-daśāpanna*). Therefore here my action or tendency to act would follow (causally) from *mere* awareness which may even be a dubious one, but not from my *knowledge* that it is a piece of knowledge. When confirmatory behaviour follows, I become truly aware that I have a piece of confirmatory knowledge. Vācaspati qualifies this statement by saying that such further confirmation of the initial confirmatory knowledge is needed only when we entertain a doubt about the veracity of the initial confirmatory awareness on the analogy of dreams etc. The idea is that I might experience quenching of thirst but still I may not be sure whether it is not a dream etc. For in dreams etc. I can also have the

[45] Ibid. J. N. Mohanty calls this an 'absurd' view. This is not a fair criticism. For each awareness is a 'suspect' until proven innocent.

[46] This is indeed a possibility. The young son of an American friend once commented in my presence that he drank only coke for he thought that water would not quench thirst!

same experience. When such a problem arises, I depend upon confirmatory behaviour to support my confirmatory knowledge (e.g. I may just examine whether the thirst is gone, wait for a few minutes etc.).

Vācaspati, therefore, gets out of the dilemma posed by the sceptic in his own way. The problem is precisely this. In saying with Nyāya that an awareness is known to be knowledge by another knowledge, in fact, an inference, we may end up with either a vicious circle or an infinite regress. For even to make such an inference possible we need a knowledge of the logical 'mark', i.e. either a knowledge of what we have called *likeness* or the confirmatory behaviour. Now the second knowledge may need further confirmation. In other words, we have to know its knowledge-hood to prevent the 'infection' of doubt. (A dubious awareness of the logical mark does not generate inference.) Vācaspati says in unmistakable language:

> The awareness of the logical mark *likeness*, belonging to the first awareness, is a mental perception. Falsity of such mental perception is not (never?) to be found, and hence all doubts about its being wrong are completely (*parītaḥ*) removed. Therefore knowledge-hood of this (mental perception) is 'self-established'. Hence there is no infinite regress.[47]

Here 'self-established' raises again the exegetical problems in the Nyāya tradition. It is explained again by Vardhamāna as 'being known (established) by (another) *inward* (mental) perception, which grasps the first mental perception'. An awareness, say c_1, whose veracity is not known yet, certifies the knowledge-hood or veracity of another awareness, say c_2, provided no doubt has originated regarding the lack of veracity of c_1. If such a doubt arises, it infects the object of c_1, and thereby renders the veracity of c_2 dubious. In such cases we have to remove the initial doubt by a knowledge, say, c_0 which will certify the veracity of c_1, and it, in its turn, will certify the veracity of c_2. This need not lead to an infinite regress as long as we admit with Nyāya that a piece of knowledge does not have to be *known* first as a piece of knowledge for it to certify the veracity of another. The last in the series (backwards), c_0 can by itself do the job of certifying and the cognizer may meanwhile move to a different subject and/or may not pause to question the veracity of c_0. This seems to be a better and pragmatic explanation of the Nyāya reply to the sceptical charge of infinite regress.

[47] Vācaspati (Thakur's edn.), p. 30; Udayana's comment on p. 99.

If Vācaspati is to be interpreted *literally*, then one has to say that he divides knowledges (knowing events) into two groups. There are those cases whose knowledge-hood is established by a separate inference: external perceptions and knowledge from scriptures or linguistic expressions. There are others whose knowledge-hood is 'self-established' (i.e. established by whatever grasps the awareness itself): inference, *upamāna* (analogical identification), and mental perception. Udayana adds one more item to the second list: *dharmi-jñāna* (perceptual awareness, internal or external, of the entity that constitutes the subject-entity of a 'propositional' or constructive awareness), e.g. awareness of *a* which is a constituent of the awareness '*a* is *F*'. Udayana believes that the knowledge-hood of the awareness of *a* cannot be doubted in this case, for that would make the construction '*a* is *F*' practically impossible. In other words, if I am already aware that *a* is *F*, I must have an awareness of *a*. (See previous section.)

The prevailing Nyāya view, however, is that knowledge-hood of all knowing events *can* be established by an inference (of either kind described above) whenever it is possible to doubt whether the cognitive event concerned is a piece of knowledge or not. Udayana therefore offers the following compromise between Vācaspati's statement and that of other Naiyāyikas. When Vācaspati uses the expression 'self-established', he simply means that it is not the case that these are never self-established and this implies that these knowing events are *mostly* (though not always) self-established.

In other words, according to Udayana, Vācaspati's intention is to underline the undeniable fact that these knowing events are such that their knowledge-hood is *easily (sukara-eva)* established by the immediately succeeding mental perception of these events. This is so precisely because chances of doubt, as I have already noted, are practically non-existent in these cases. But, Udayana insists, it is quite (logically) possible that a person is in doubt as regards their knowledge-hood. In such remote cases, however, their knowledge-hood can be established by another inference (*parataḥ*). The supposed infinite regress can be stopped through practical considerations that we have already noted.

Another important point that we must note in this connection is this. Both Gaṅgeśa and Udayana seem to allow that our mental *inward* perception of inner events, such as, cognition, pleasure, pain, and desire, is *invariably* a piece of knowledge (*pramāṇya-niyatatvāt*, Gaṅgeśa), although we may not *always* know its knowledge-hood automatically. To demonstrate this the following argument is suggested.

Let us suppose that a person, *a*, is aware that this is silver. This awareness may be true or false according as the object identified or referred to on that occasion by 'this' is a piece of silver or not. Next, he has an *inward* (mental) perception of this awareness, in which he is aware that he is simply aware that this is silver. Since the second awareness grasps the first simply as an awareness (not as knowledge or illusion) nothing can possibly go wrong with it. The second awareness could have been wrong or false only if the first awareness were not, in fact, an awareness. But this is ruled out from the beginning. This point seems to be intuitively grasped when somebody says 'How can I be wrong about my own feelings, intense pain, etc.?' Udayana says that our inner episodes are sometimes characterized by an intensity (*tīvra-saṃvegitā*) such that they force themselves into our consciousness, much as some intense pain. Some cognitive events (awareness) have this character of intensity and hence there always arises a mental inward perception of them and such perceptions can never be misperceptions. This would mean that according to Nyāya, one cannot be deluded about one's being in pain etc. (See Chapter 9.)

How is the falsity of an awareness known? The answer is given by Udayana as follows:

> Just as the knowledge-hood (of an awareness), with regard to an 'unfamiliar' situation is ascertained (i.e. known) by confirmatory behaviour, the falsity (of an awareness) is ascertained by failure of such behaviour. Similarly, just as before the confirmatory behaviour ensues in a 'familiar' situation knowledge-hood is ascertained by *likeness*, falsity (in such situations) is also ascertained (through *likeness*).[48]

A person suffering from eye-disease will see a double moon repeatedly in the evening sky, and this will therefore be a case of 'familiar' situation. But he will still take it to be false on the basis of the '*likeness*' inference. He will see that this cognition resembles in relevant respects other cases of false awareness (where falsity has already been determined). This is the general *likeness*. He would also see that his cognition resembles, in essential details, his first awareness of the double moon (when his eye-disease started and when he ascertained its falsehood by asking others etc.).

This shows that Nyāya is consistent in maintaining that a person may be aware that he is aware that *p*, but this is not enough for him to know whether *p* is true or not. Knowledgehood and falsehood are

[48] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 97.

properties of his (first) awareness and he may remain unaware which one of these properties his awareness has even when he is aware of his (first) awareness. Usually an inference (of either kind described above) helps us to establish the knowledgehood as well as falsity. However when an *inward* perception is grasped by another *inward* perception, Udayana says that its specific characters, *inwardness*, etc., are also grasped thereby. This is another way of saying that we grasp its knowledgehood also by the same token. But if we still indulge in a doubt as regards its knowledgehood, we have to fall back upon an inference to resolve it.

6
Analysis of Perceptual Illusion

We find things about seeing puzzling because we do not find the whole business of seeing puzzling enough.

L. WITTGENSTEIN

6.1 Seeing and Seeing-as

Sensory (perceptual) illusion is said to be 'promiscuous' in Nyāya. Veridical perception is therefore characterized by *Nyāyasūtra*, 1.1.4, as 'non-promiscuous' (*a-vyabhicārin*). Promiscuity involves one's indiscriminate relation with at least two persons at the same time. Promiscuity of awareness here means that it deals with two 'objects' at the same time. Let us call an awareness simple if it deals with only one object (unanalysed, but not necessarily unanalysable). An awareness then would be non-simple if it deals with more than one object. Our perceptual awareness is very seldom simple in the above sense, although in exceptional cases, and then only under some theoretical consideration, it can become simple. We can, however, analyse a non-simple awareness and abstract a simple one from it for our convenience. In a non-simple awareness, then, there will be at least two objects. We can call it a molecular non-simple awareness if these two objects are connected in a particular way. Usually the two play two different roles to form a unity: one is the 'chief' (*mukhya*) and the other is subordinate (*gauṇa*), one is being characterized while the other is the characteristic (*dharma-dharmin*), and one is the qualificand (*viśesya*) while the other is the qualifier (*prakāra*). (An awareness of two seemingly unconnected objects, awareness of the conjunct, *a* and *b*, or the alternant, *a* or *b*, or the negation, not-*a*, would be non-simple under this description. In the case of the first two, however, we have a free choice of regarding any one of the constituents as the 'chief'. In 'not-*a*' usually an absence is the qualificand or 'chief' and it is qualified or distinguished by *a*.)

The two objects, while playing different roles, can form a unity when they are connected. They would form a *fake* unity when they are not connected. Promiscuity of awareness does not mean simply that it

deals with two objects, for then most awareness would be promiscuous. Rather the promiscuity consists in dealing with and uniting two objects in the above way when they are not so connected or united in the actual world. Seeing a tree as a tree is not promiscuous. Awareness of the table as a table (or as brown, if it *is* brown) is not promiscuous. For the two objects here are the thing (tree) and the tree-character (or tree-universal or tree-ness, if we accept such entities). And they *are* connected. We do not here unite the character with something to which it does not belong. But seeing a rope as a snake is promiscuous. For the two objects are the thing (rope) and the snake-character. The snake character does not belong to the thing (rope) and therefore our seeing it as a snake is promiscuous in so far as it unites them into one complex.

I have remarked that perceptual awareness is seldom simple in the above sense. This point is sometimes made by such claims as 'All seeing is seeing *as* . . .'[1] If a person sees something at all, it must look to him *like* something, even if it only looks like 'somebody doing something'. I do not think there is any need to belabour the point although, as I have indicated, the universality or non-exceptionality of this position is dubious. There are some cases of seeing which are not cases of seeing-*as*. There may be a logical necessity to accept such exceptions and this will be discussed in Chapter 10. Here I wish to argue briefly that seeing is mostly seeing-*as* . . ., i.e. is seeing something as something and it is only with regard to such seeing-*as* that the possibility of promiscuity, i.e. possibility of illusion, can arise. The normal adult perceptual process is involved with various accretions due to past experience, collateral information, habitual associations, interpretations, and inference. All this makes a simple perceptual awareness a rare event that stands by itself. It is also well known that our perception could be promiscuous. It occasionally becomes promiscuous because of its involvement with all those things just mentioned. Epistemologists, therefore, would like to search for an occasion of simple perceptual awareness where chances of promiscuity are nil or logically impossible. If seeing is an occasion of 'simple' seeing in our sense of the term, and not of seeing-*as* . . ., then it is impossible for it to be promiscuous, or to be an illusion. In the epistemologist's language, it is 'incorrigible'. Some philosophers think that if we can concentrate upon the 'pure sensory core', we have reached such an awareness in our perceptual process.

[1] G. N. A. Vesey, p. 114.

A distinction is usually made between seeing-things and seeing-that in modern philosophical writings on perception. But that distinction is not relevant for our purpose here. What is relevant for our purpose is to decide whether we are seeing a simple or a non-simple thing. Very few things we see are simple in the strictest sense. Similarly, we very rarely direct our seeing only at a simple object in a conglomeration. Therefore, our seeing-things is 'non-simple' in the above sense. Some cases of seeing-things can be simple, as we have already conceded, but all so-called cases of seeing-that are non-simple for obvious reasons. It may be argued that I am blurring an important distinction between seeing-things and seeing-that. For example, F. Jackson has argued recently that while *A* in '*S* sees *A*' is subject to substitutivity (of co-referential terms), it is not so in '*S* sees that *A* is *F*'. In particular, Jackson's point is that:[2]

(1) '($A = B$) and *S* sees *A*. $\supset$ *S* sees *B*' is valid, but
(2) '($A = B$) and *S* sees that *A* is *F*. $\supset$ *S* sees that *B* is *F*' is not valid.

I do not find this to be quite convincing; for there is an unexplained ambiguity in the use of 'sees' in the second case. Assuming that we are not talking in the first person I think we have to make the following point clear. In Jackson's example, the financier absconding to Brazil sees a pleasant-looking man, and if the pleasant-looking man is also a detective, then I can very well report that the financier sees the detective, even though he may be unaware of the fact that the man he sees is a detective. But if he sees *that* the pleasant-looking man is approaching him, it does not, according to Jackson, follow that he sees *that* the detective is approaching him. I think this is wrong unless we have switched from the non-epistemic seeing (in F. I. Dretske's sense)[3] in the first case to the epistemic seeing in the second. Notice that the first implication (1) holds only because it is a case of non-epistemic seeing. Otherwise he cannot be said to be seeing the detective if he sees only a pleasant-looking man. In epistemic seeing, 'He sees a pleasant-looking man' would unpack as 'He sees that this is a pleasant-looking man', and it would not imply 'He sees that this man is a detective'. There may be other philosophic reasons for introducing the notion of seeing-that but for our purpose such cases can be treated together with cases of non-simple seeing-things. In fact, I propose to

[2] F. Jackson, pp. 155 f.   [3] F. I. Dretske, pp. 78 ff.

take non-simple seeing-things as equivalent to a sort of epistemic seeing.

Sensory illusion is a non-simple seeing, and a very odd one, because it is promiscuous. The question whether there can be sensory illusion which is also a *simple* awareness in our senses, is a question that can be reserved for later discussion. I have followed, I think, a fairly standard practice of understanding 'illusion'. We use 'illusion' for cases where something is seen but looks to be other than it is or is 'taken' to be. Thus the rope is *taken* (i.e. mistaken) to be a snake and a white wall or a conch-shell looks yellow to the jaundiced eye. Hallucinations and dreams are special cases. We may rule that they are also non-simple perceptions. I shall return to this question later.

6.2 *Two Buddhist Analyses of Illusion*

When I see a shining piece of silver which is actually a piece of shell, how do I know that I am mistaken? At the next moment or at a later time, I may perceive the same piece to be a shell, which is non-silver. Therefore there are two cases of seeing involved here. The first can be described as:

X looks F to S at t_1.

The second as:

X looks G to S at t_2.

It is assumed that F and G are mutually exclusive characteristics. The Sanskrit philosopher calls the second case the 'contradicting or correcting awareness' (*bādhaka pratyaya*) in relation to the first case which is the case of illusion. The 'correcting' awareness falsifies the 'looks F'. But the question arises: what is (or was) this 'looks F'? From the Buddhist circle, there are apparently two alternative answers. (To be sure, these two views are ascribed to the Buddhists by their non-Buddhist counterparts.) From the non-Buddhist circle, there are, at a conservative estimate,[4] at least three different answers. I shall examine all of them here. The two Buddhist analyses of illusion may be attributed to two different views about the nature of awareness. According to one, our awareness has a 'form' (*ākāra*) intrinsic to itself, while the other maintains that our awareness is essentially 'formless'.

[4] I follow Vācaspati Miśra in giving this list of two Buddhist and three non-Buddhist views. See Vācaspati under NS, 1.1.2 (pp. 160–4, A. Thakur's edn.). Bhāsarvajña notes eight different views, pp. 26–32. There are also other ramifications.

The latter claims that our awareness in illusion *falsely* appears to be 'burdened' with an object—an object which is non-existent (*asat*). The former believes that our illusory awareness projects its own 'form' as an external object.

My awareness of silver is *falsified* by my veridical awareness of the piece of shell. Obviously this does not mean that there was a piece of silver there which has now been destroyed or transformed into a shell. For our 'robust sense' of reality as well as of the nature of the material object would not allow such a conclusion. Therefore the piece of silver that I saw or misperceived was nothing but part of my awareness. In other words, this was a *mental* entity, an object-form that my awareness grasped or made a part of itself. If this is conceded, then it is easy to explain how it has been 'destroyed' or 'falsified' by our next awareness. This amounts to saying that what *appeared* in such awareness was a 'form', a qualifying part of that very awareness and as long as the 'form' cannot exist when the awareness passes away, the silver-appearance, the mental entity, would not exist without that awareness. This is the position of the Buddhist generally belonging to the Yogācāra-school or rather the school that upholds *sākāra-vāda*.

The main part of this theory, which is technically called the 'revelation of the awareness itself' (*ātmakhyāti*), is that the silver-form or the silverlike appearance that we are sensorily aware of is not external to the awareness but internal (*āntara*) to it. In this respect, the silver-form (comparable to the sensory datum) shares the character of such 'internal' episodes as pain or pleasure. We have awareness of pain or pleasure, but this pain or pleasure that we 'feel' cannot be anything 'external' to the awareness itself which reveals it. We have pain-form or pleasure-form which, according to the Buddhist, is an integral part of the awareness itself. Similarly the silver-form in a sensory illusion is an integral part of the awareness. An argument is formulated as follows: in our sensory illusion, there are three elements: (i) the silver-form that is picked out by the part 'silver' in the expression 'this (is) silver', (ii) what lies in front, and is picked out by the part 'this', and (iii) the awareness itself. Now the silver-form has a problematic character. It can presumably be connected with the two other elements of the complex: (ii) what lies in front and (iii) the awareness itself. However, while the illusory awareness ascribes it to what lies in front (the external object), the 'correcting' awareness refutes such an ascription. By elimination, therefore, the silver-form can *rightly* be connected with the third remaining element, the awareness itself. Since

there is no other element involved in the structure of the awareness, the silver-form cannot be attached to anything else. To put the matter simply: the silver-form in the awareness is not matched by anything in the objective situation with which we are concerned here. Hence it must belong to the subjective side, i.e. be only a part of the awareness itself. As there is no 'knower' or self on the subjective side for the Buddhist, there remains only awareness.[5] If the silver-form is in this way attached to the awareness itself, the Buddhist will say that the silver-form is therefore a characteristic of the awareness, not of anything lying outside. Therefore I have called it a 'mental' entity or a non-external existent. I presume that any sense-data philosopher who argues that a sense-datum is a mental entity (and there cannot be any unsensed sense-datum) would have to take a similar position. It might be said that the drunkard's perception of pink rats, Macbeth's vision of the dagger, and all other hallucinations could be explained in this way, the object of awareness being non-physical in all such cases. The *sākāra-vāda* of the Yogācāra Buddhist is however a more radical theory than this, as we shall see.

Regarding the existence of mental objects as well as of mental events, there has been much discussion in what is considered a special branch of philosophy, namely the philosophy of mind. The arguments in favour of materialism, behaviourism, and physicalism, which eliminate (or 'parse away') mental objects or inner events such as pain or after-image in favour of the physical, are too well known to be repeated here. It may be tentatively assumed that the above Indian philosophers accept mental entities as real and intelligible and hence would regard the modern programme for eliminating all mentalist vocabulary as unnecessary. Hence from this point of view there will be little sympathy for the claim that all our talk of mental entities must be banished from any philosophical discourse. It is undeniable that mental objects like pain cannot *exist* without there being a person having them. But must all things that exist or are presumed to exist *exist* independently of the mind? It seems that the Sautrāntika–Yogācāra Buddhist goes to the other extreme and envisions a programme that could eliminate all physicalist vocabulary in favour of phenomenalistic entities alone. Some would, however, prefer to interpret the

[5] This type of argument is technically called *arthāpatti* (Mīmāṁsā) or *pariśeṣa* (Nyāya): of several possibilities, *a*, *b*, *c* . . . if all but one, say *c*, are rejected by evidence to the contrary, *c* is automatically established. See my *Logic, Language and Reality: An Introduction to Indian Philosophical Studies*, I. 4.

Yogācāra entities as purely 'mental'. If this seems to offend common sense, the physicalist should remember that his position too occasionally offends our presumably robust common sense. Mental events are undeniably facts as much as a car accident is a fact in the external world. There may or may not always be a recognizable and identifiable (under presumably some laboratory condition) physical change in the brain-cells concomitant with each mental event. We must admit that beyond a certain limit, the physicalist's programme becomes as much mysterious and conjectural as that of a mentalist or even a phenomenalist. In any case, some philosophers now accept the mentalist vocabulary for the sake of convenience, and because it would *practically* be impossible to do otherwise, if not for any other compelling reason.[6] I will come back to this problem later. My own position is, however, that while there are some obvious internal episodes and mental entities, such as pain, pleasure, remembering, and confusing, it is not absolutely clear that the immediate objects of our sensory illusion should necessarily be 'non-existent' or purely mental in the way some Buddhists claim. The main problem in the West has been the mysterious sway that Cartesian dualism held over centuries. In the classical Indian philosophy of mind, it may be noted, such a radical sort of dualism was never seriously maintained.

Whether or not we can grasp external objects in our awareness, there is undeniably a common feeling shared by all of us that there is an external world. Some (Mādhyamika) Buddhists disagree with their Sautrāntika–Yogācāra counterparts in holding that our awareness does not really have any *form* (*ākāra*) that is intrinsic to it. The Naiyāyikas and the Prābhākaras join hands with this section of the Buddhists in this regard. They can all be classified as those who regard awareness *formless* (*nirākāra-jñāna-vādin*). It is, however, maintained in this theory also that one awareness is distinguished from another by virtue of its 'object-form', i.e. that which appears in it as its object. Thus the awareness of blue will be distinct from the awareness of green because one is characterized by 'blue-grasping' while the other by 'green-grasping'. These 'blue-grasping' and 'green-grasping', which we have just called particular 'object-forms' are, however, not an intrinsic part of the awareness in this theory for awareness is essentially *formless*. The object-form is also called the 'apprehensible form' (*grāhya*) because it

[6] This is the general position of many modern Western philosophers who are neither behaviourist nor idealist, and who reject Cartesian dualism. See also ch. 8.6.

is apprehended by the awareness and the awareness is called the 'apprehender' (*grāhaka*).

That our sensory awareness is characterized by an apprehensible object-form is revealed by its linguistic description. To describe the awareness we say, 'it is an awareness of blue', or to express what is apprehended we say, 'it is blue'. This apprehensible object-form gives the *formless* awareness a recognizable shape as it were, so that we can distinguish one from the other. The major point here is that although the awareness is basically *formless*, it has the peculiar capacity of revealing or manifesting an entirely non-existent or unreal object (*asat-prakāśana-śīla*; recall Vasubandhu in *Vijñapti-kārikā* 1: *asad-arthāva-bhāsanāt*), and hence it is no wonder that our perceptual illusion reveals or manifests an object (that particular snake that I saw just a moment ago for example) that has no counterpart in reality. In fact this particular is not even identified with the illusion itself (in this theory), for the object's distinctness from the awareness that grasps it is almost experientially proven (recall also Udayana: *na grāhya-bhedam avadhūya dhiyo'sti vṛttiḥ*).

It should be emphasized, even at the risk of repetition, that each awareness arises only when it is characterized by some apprehensible form, but since awareness is, in this theory, essentially *formless* like the sky or space (*colourless* like the transparent crystal), it is only *nominally* characterized by its particular apprehensible *form*. The apprehensible form is not an essential part of our awareness. But what could be its objective status? If it is posited only as a 'mediator' between the external world and the internal episode of awareness then its objective status is dubious. Nyāya and Prābhākara would like to identify this apprehensible-form with the external reality or parts of such reality. The Sautrāntikas who do not align themselves with the Yogācārins would probably have to say that the so-called apprehensible-form is a 'representation' (in some acceptable sense) of the external object. Those Buddhists who believe that awareness must have a *form* (an object-form), the Yogācārins, argue that the apprehensible-form is an 'internal' entity. It is *mental* for it is that part of awareness which is externalized or projected outside. But the Mādhyamika Buddhists who would regard awareness as being essentially *formless* would argue that the apprehensible-form in erroneous perception, since it is neither mental nor material, neither external nor internal, is in fact an unreal or non-existent (*a-sat*) entity. The apprehensible object-form, the argument continues, can be held to be real provided it fulfils either of

two conditions: (i) it is mirrored by the part of an external reality, or (ii) it is an integral part of the 'internal' reality, the awareness-episode itself. But since the apprehensible snake-form in the perceptual illusion of a snake fulfils neither of these conditions, it must be regarded as non-existent or unreal. It is also to be concluded therefore that our awareness possesses the power to make a non-existent object appear in it.

The claim here is something like this. The nature of our awareness is such that when it arises as an episode from all its causal factors, it arises invariably apprehending some object-form that is different from it. The proponent of the above argument shows that the nature of an awareness cannot be such that its object-form is always, or is always caused by, an existent entity. The object-form may very well be a non-existent entity. We do have awareness of past and future things, where we cannot say that the object-forms are directly caused by those past or future things. Similarly we have to deal with the episodes of awareness of non-existent, unactual things. Because they are non-existent at the time when the awareness episode arises, they cannot be causally responsible for the relevant object-forms, the apprehensible-forms, in the awareness. In other words, in order to be the apprehensible object-form of awareness, it is not always necessary, though it may be sufficient, for an external object to 'create' such an object-form. For the object-form may be an unreal, a non-existent object, which the awareness apprehends or grasps as the apprehensible, as necessarily happens in dreams or hallucinations (*keśādi-darśana*). Therefore the *asat* 'non-existent' object-form of the illusion, 'this is a piece of silver' is *unreal* for it meets neither test of reality: it is not a contribution from (a representation of) the external object and it is not *created* by the awareness itself. It is only apprehended or grasped by the awareness.

This, I think, is the position of those who hold the 'revelation of the non-existent' (*asat-khyāti*) theory of sensory illusion. This is stated in non-Buddhist texts rather poorly and in an unconvincing manner. The object, i.e. the silver-form that is grasped in our sensory awareness is *asat*, unreal or non-existent. The 'correcting' awareness in which the piece appears as non-silver to the perceiver and he says 'this is *not* silver' exposes this fact, viz. non-existence of that silver-form that we grasped before. Commentators of the non-Buddhist tradition ascribe this view to the Mādhyamika or *śūnyavāda* school. However, this ascription need not be taken to be strictly correct.

The obvious difficulties of this view led to the other Buddhist view, which we have mentioned already. This is held by those who held the Yogācāra doctrine: The object-form is an integral part of the awareness itself, each awareness being different from another by virtue of this unique object-form which appears in it. The object-form does not come from outside. In fact when the object-form is projected outside or externalized, we are said to have an awareness of the external object. An awareness of blue is determined by the blue-form which is unique to that awareness. Therefore the object-form intrinsically belonging to the awareness determines it as an awareness of that very object. In a true awareness the object-form becomes the 'evidence' (*pramāṇa*) for the apprehension of the object. The same episode, awareness, in one role supplies the evidence, i.e. the object-form (as *pramāṇa*), for the apprehension and in another role becomes the result (*phala*), i.e. what is established by that evidence, namely the apprehension of the object. This is not to be regarded as impossible. For example, the same oak tree in the aspect of being an oak acts as evidence (*liṅga*) for being regarded as a tree. Here the oak-aspect is the evidence for the tree-aspect, although the two in principle are inseparable. Just as we can say that 'this is a tree' because it is an oak, similarly it is possible to assert that there is apprehension of the object because the object-form belongs to it as an integral part. In this way these Buddhists would move towards some kind of phenomenalism and idealism, for they would claim that we do not need to refer to the external world in order to explain, understand, and distinguish our awareness-episodes. They would maintain that the familiar external world is nothing but these object-forms of true awareness (*pramāṇa*) individually externalized. In sensory illusion etc., the object-form, i.e. the snake-form, belongs essentially to the awareness itself, for its externalization is repudiated by our 'correcting' awareness (awareness that corrects the previous error) which says 'this is *not* silver'. This counter-thrust against externalization would establish the internal or mental nature of the object-form that is grasped in sensory illusion.

It may be noted that the theory of 'the revelation of the non-existent' in illusion is not to be totally neglected. For even in the Nyāya realistic analysis of illusion, where the objects apprehended are broken into bits and pieces so that they can be identified with the bits and pieces of the actual world, there is one recalcitrant element that is not totally eliminable in this way! It is the *connection* (*saṃsarga*) that one bit has

with the other. This has to be finally a non-existent entity, an *asat* particular. Illusion thus uses its own cement to connect real bits and pieces into some fanciful whole. (See below.)

In this brief reconstruction of the views of the two Buddhist schools I have tried to simplify the rather complex arguments of the Buddhist, but the vocabulary that is common to the Buddhist discussion is not familiar today in philosophic parlance. Hence difficulties exist especially in following the thread of the argument as we jump from one step to another. In spite of these problems of exposition, I believe the rather specific nature of Buddhist phenomenalism is clear, though the arguments and philosophic motivation which led the Buddhist to these positions may still remain obscure. I shall now expound the three non-Buddhist theories of sensory illusion.

6.3 The Advaita View of the Inexplicability of the Appearance

The first well-known non-Buddhist view, which is in a way derivable also from the Buddhist position, is called the *anirvacanīyakhyāti*, which says that the object-form, the silver-form or the snake-form, in sensory illusion (expressible as 'this is silver' or 'this is a snake') must belong to a third realm of objects which is neither existent nor non-existent. This view resolves the problematic character of the object-form grasped in illusion by positing a third realm, which is sometimes called (wrongly, I think) in modern interpretations as the 'transcendental' realm. This view belongs to Advaita Vedānta. It is obvious that this position exploits the weak points of the two Buddhist views. First, the silver-form cannot *really* be non-existent or unreal for (i) it appeared in an apparently perceptual awareness and (ii) according to one meaning of 'see' '*a* sees *X*' implies '*X* exists'. Something, it may be argued, which was so vivid and certain in my 'direct' awareness cannot easily be ruled out as unreal. The 'revelation of the non-existent' (*asat-khyāti*) view is rather weak on this point. For it does not explain why an unreal object is grasped at all by illusion. Second, the silver-form cannot really be internal or mental, for after all a vivid perceptual experience grasps it as an external object. Nor can the silver-form be regarded as existent or real, for the 'correcting' awareness falsifies that possibility. Nor can we rule that the silver-form is therefore both real and unreal, existent and non-existent, for that would be a contradiction. With such arguments, it is concluded that the nature of the silver-form appearing in illusion therefore cannot be made explicit (cf. *vacanīya*) as existent or as non-existent, for it is neither. It is uncategorizable by the ordinary

notion of the existent and the non-existent. This view is generalized in Advaita to support another philosophical doctrine. Śaṃkara explains the status of this whole external, material world on this model of sensory illusion. Our ordinary veridical perception reveals diversities of the external but the scriptures say that there is the non-dual Brahman and Brahman-awareness will ultimately 'falsify' the diversity-awareness. Because of the presence of such falsifying awareness, therefore, the diversity of the external world would have the same *uncategorizable* status. It is, in the above sense, neither existent nor non-existent, neither real nor unreal. To put it another way, the world has an 'inexplicable' (or ineffable) existence (*a-nirvacanīya* or *prātibhāsika sattā*), for under examination (*vicāra*) it yields to neither the characteristic or mark of the existent nor that of the non-existent. We need not concern ourselves too much with this metaphysical thesis which is an integral part or a necessary consequence of the scriptural (and perhaps experiential in the mystical sense) assertion about the Brahman-awareness. But this thesis need not be called (as it often is by some modern exponents) 'illusionism' in the ordinary sense of illusion. Rather, the model of sensory illusion is used as an argument to show that the world of experience is neither categorizable as real or existent nor as unreal or non-existent. The world does not strictly conform to the way we intuitively understand these terms, 'real–unreal' or 'existent–non-existent'.

One may recall here the Brentano thesis about the 'intentional inexistence' of the objects of all psychological verbs. One of the marks of intentional inexistence is this: from '*a F*'s *X*' (where *F* stands for any psychological verb) we cannot infer whether *X* exists or does not exist.[7] Here the Advaitin is dealing with a specific type of psychological verb, cases of illusion, i.e. illusorily seeing *X* (the SNAKE). Now the argument is that this SNAKE can be said to be neither existent nor non-existent. Having established the status of the SNAKE in illusion in this way, the Advaitin proceeds to show that the status of the whole world appearing in our awareness is similar: indescribable either-as-existent-or-as-non-existent. In other words, the situation here is not comparable to what we ordinarily understand by the existents, e.g. the chair I am sitting upon, or the pen I am writing with, nor is it comparable with what we ordinarily understand by the non-existent or unreal, the rabbit's horn, the son of a barren woman, etc.[8]

[7] F. Brentano, pp. 39–61.
[8] For Śaṁkara's interpretation of *adhyāsa*, see *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, pp. 1–4.

We may put this another way: our *a priori* notion of existence and non-existence falls short of the world we actually experience. Or the world we experience behaves strangely enough to enable us to say that it contradicts our *a priori* notions of real and unreal. The snake that I experienced in my sensory illusion had, with all its peculiarities and generalities, the unmistakable mark of being real and existent but now it has vanished, and a thing as real as a snake cannot do this. Therefore, how else could we classify that snake-form in our illusion except as neither real nor unreal? This theory in fact tends more towards realism than phenomenalism or idealism. For it accepts the external world more seriously as real and existent. It is only in the context of the ultimate Brahman awareness that the reality-status of this world becomes questionable.

6.4 *The Prābhākara View of No-illusion*

Now I shall discuss the views of the two avowedly realistic schools, the Prābhākara Mīmāṃsaka and the Nyāya. The best way to introduce the Prābhākara is to say something about what is called the 'existential import' of the verb 'to see'. I believe the matter is concerned not simply with the English usage of the verb 'see', for the problem exists also in Sanskrit philosophy of perception. I may refer to how Śabara has formulated the principle of existential import in perception.[9] To restate the Śabara principle: from '*S* sees *A*' we can infer '*A* exists', i.e. there must be something satisfying the description, or having the name, *A*, which *S* sees. Philosophers such as G. E. Moore and A. J. Ayer have tried to distinguish the different uses of this verb, in one case 'to see' is like 'to eat', which carries with it the existential implication of what is seen (or eaten), while in another case seeing does not have the said existential import, i.e. seeing something is consistent with the non-existence of what is seen.[10]

There are, among other things, two distinct problems here which I wish to discuss. First, people can *say* that they see things which they also believe (at the moment of seeing) to exist. A little boy can see Santa Claus or a ghost and he also believes that such a being exists and is there. Hence this is not really a counter-example to the use of 'see' governed by the 'existence' condition. A proper counter-example would be found in the percipient saying that he sees *X* with the full

[9] Śabara, *Mīmāṁsā-bhāṣya*; see also ch. 7.5.

[10] G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 64 ff; A. J. Ayer, *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, (1962 edn.), p. 21.

awareness that *X* is not present or does not exist. I concede that there are such examples. But I suggest that we could take it as a metaphorical extension of the use of the verb based upon similarity of situation (in both sorts of cases there are eyes open, broad daylight, I was not dreaming, I had an experience etc.). Second, with regard to after-image and other private data, dark patches, blurs, blotches, etc., it is perhaps still possible to claim that the 'existence' condition holds, unless our 'existence' condition further implies that the object be publicly observable. In fact it is reasonable to claim that if I see a blur, it exists for me, for the failure of other people to see it does not mean that *I* do not see it.

Some modern representationalists (e.g. F. Jackson)[11] argue that if Macbeth *saw* a dagger (which other people failed to see) then there must have been a dagger-like shape for only Macbeth to see. Or, in other words, 'there may have been a *mental image* seen by Macbeth which he mistakenly took to be a dagger'. This means that although it is true, as if by definition, that nothing *physical* or material or public is seen when we are hallucinating, it does not follow from the same definition that something private or non-physical or mental cannot be seen when hallucination occurs. Even a Yogācāra Buddhist would say that when someone is sensorily aware of the silver-form in sensory ilusion, that silver-form he sees exists *for him*, though not as a publicly observable object. It exists as an integral part of that very awareness. The Prābhākara would raise a question at this point: if he sees the silver-form which exists, why should we call that awareness an illusion at all? The Prābhākara is however not a representationalist as we shall see presently. He is a direct realist, though he disagrees with Nyāya in his analysis of illusion. He takes the extreme position that if illusion means awareness of *X* when *X* is unreal or not there, then there cannot be any illusion in this given sense of the term, for all obvious cases of illusion can be explained away in a different manner. This position is called *akhyāti* or *satkhyāti* or *vivekākhyāti*. *Akhyāti* means 'no illusion'; *sat-khyāti* means 'only the existent (real) appears in our awareness', and *vivekākhyāti* means 'the distinction between past experience and present experience is "missed" (in illusion)'. All these three expressions (used as names here) in fact describe different aspects of a theory. I shall reconstruct the theory along with the usual arguments that are given in its favour.

[11] F. Jackson, pp. 50 ff.

We have said earlier that a perceptual (sensory) illusion is a non-simple awareness, for it involves at least two elements. This, however, does not mean that the awareness is always judgemental in the sense that it is expressed as 'this is silver', nor does it mean that the percipient necessarily says 'I see that this is silver' to express his inner judgement. For all we know, the illusion may happen too quickly for the verbalization to arise. (On verbalization and related problems, see Chapters 8 and 10.) But still it would be a non-simple awareness in our sense. For it would probably be admitted by all parties that even in my sensory illusion of a blue blur when there is only a white expanse (a wall), I am ready to allow a duality of what appears in the awareness and what stimulated the sensory faculty (I say 'probably' because only some form of extreme phenomenalism, which will then move close to idealism and then to solipsism, may dispute this account). Sanskrit philosophers call the first *pratibhāsa*, 'that which *appears* in awareness', and the second *ālambana*, 'what *supports* the awareness by (causally?) stimulating etc.'.

It might be argued that given the above duality and the non-simple nature of the sensory perception, it is possible to think that such seeing could potentially deliver a judgement of the form 'this is *F*'. I think this argument is valid but the crucial word is 'potentially', for the point is that it may or may not actually deliver the judgement required. Even so the sensory perception would be non-simple according to our definition, for it involves the duality mentioned above. It is possible for such a perception to be an illusion provided the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*) deviates (that is how the Sanskrit philosophers would like to put it, *vyabhicarati*) from 'the support-stimulant' (*ālambana*). In other words, if *X* looks some way to *S* and *X* is not that way at all, then *S*'s perception is an illusion. If I am seeing, for whatever reason, a blue blur in the corner of the white expanse (wall) at the moment while the white wall, even in that corner, is not that way at all, then my seeing is illusory. The Prābhākara takes his cue here, and goes on to say that there is another alternative to our declaring this awareness to be illusory. The notion of *ālambana*, 'the support-stimulant', from which the *pratibhāsa*, 'appearance', is said to deviate, has been explicitly contrived in the above account of illusion as performing a causal function. But this may not be an essential constituent of the notion of *ālambana*, 'the support', though in most cases that which is the *support* is also the *stimulant* and hence a causal factor. For example a past object (or a future one) may be the *support*, i.e. the objective support (or

ālambana) of some present awareness. Therefore it is possible to say that the 'objective support' and the 'appearance' of a particular awareness not only can coincide (as opposed to 'deviate') and be the same, but they also always or necessarily 'coincide'. If they do so necessarily, then, the argument continues, there cannot arise any illusion in the given sense where the 'support' (*ālambana*) must deviate from the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*). In other words, both Nyāya and Prābhākara would hold that in veridical perception what lends objective (causal) support (*ālambana*) to the awareness is also the object that appears in it, the 'object-form' and the (external) object being not separable at all. If a red patch causes the awareness of red, then the 'red-appearance' is nothing that could be distinguishable from the red patch itself. If the same can be maintained in the case of perceptual illusion, then we have to say that there cannot be any proper illusion.

The above, rather strenuous, argument suggests a useful analysis of what we ordinarily take to be illusion. The Prābhākara says that each sensory illusion is non-simple not only because it is involved with at least two objects but also because it combines two distinct modes of awareness into one. One is the direct sensing while the other is a 'concealed' remembering. The judgement into which this 'illusion' can be developed has two distinct expressions, 'this' and 'silver' as in 'this (is) silver'. Here the 'this' part singles out the direct sensing, while the 'silver' part points to the 'concealed' remembering. 'Illusion' means that these two distinct modes of awareness are *confused* as one. This confusion is due to our lack of knowledge of their distinctness. To be sure, we are confused not in our awareness but only in our behaviours, actions etc. (*vyavahāra*). Because we cannot grasp the distinction between the two truly distinct cases of awareness, we tend to treat them as a unity (out of confusion) in our verbal report, actions, speech-behaviour etc. (*vyavahāra*); we further act on the basis of this confusion or 'fusion'.

The 'this' part shows that what we grasp lies in front, but owing to some defect in the causal situation we cannot fully grasp it as a piece of shell. The similarity between a piece of silver and a shell being grasped in this way reminds the percipient of the *previously experienced* silver-character. Here again, owing to some defect in the causal situation, the remembering mode of awareness 'conceals' its own nature (*pramuṣṭa-tattā*) in the sense that it does not fully grasp that the silver-character we experience here is only a memory of such a character and is not actually present. In other words, in remembering *F* we are usually

aware that we had directly experienced *F* once before. The present case is, however, not the usual kind of remembering, for we are only aware of *F* and the fact of its being previously experienced is concealed from the awareness. In this way in our speech-behaviour (*vyavahāra*), a *fusion* of memory (remembering) and perception has taken place and as a result we have what we call an illusion. In this analysis of illusion, it is maintained that what we *see*, i.e. the piece of shell, exists even though we do not see it *as* a piece of shell and what we actually remember, i.e. the silver-character, is not what we see, though in our confusion, we *think* or *say* that we see it. *Saying* and *thinking* are only different modes of *vyavahāra* here. In fact there is a double fusion, according to this analysis. We are unaware of the distinction between objects—what is actually seen and what is actually remembered—and we are unaware, in addition, of the distinction between the two modes of awareness, seeing and remembering. Illusion is thus explained in terms of this double lack of awareness of distinction (cf. *vivekāgraha*).

Each individual piece of awareness, under this theory, is correct or non-illusory in the sense that it is 'object-corresponding' (*yathārtha*). In other words, here the 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*) does not deviate from the 'support' (*ālambana*) in either case. In the perceptual component, the 'appearance' is expressed as 'this' and the 'objective support' is also what lies before the perceiver, while in the 'remembrance' component, the 'objective support' is the *remembered* silver. But what appears in the awareness is the *unqualified* silver. That is the silver of our past experience which is now only being *remembered*. But the *remembered* aspect of the past silver does not appear along with the appearance of silver in our present awareness. In other words, the awareness is the awareness of an indefinite piece of silver, not of *that* piece of silver (i.e. the silver I had seen before).

Sometimes, the Prābhākara argues, two distinct cases of perception are fused together to generate a so-called illusion, instead of a fusion between a seeing and a remembering. A jaundiced person, for example, perceives the conch-shell as yellow. Here the awareness of yellow is a sensory perception although this yellow is not of the object we distinguish in our visual field, i.e. the conch-shell. The yellow belongs to the disease that affects the eye. It is like seeing the white conch-shell through yellow glass where the yellow we see belongs to the glass. The yellow of the disease is sensed but that it belongs to the disease is not apprehended, just as the yellow of a very transparent glass plate may be grasped without our realizing that it is a quality of

the glass plate. The awareness of the conch-shell is also perceptual. Because of the obvious defect in the perceptual factors, we grasp only the material body, the conch-shell as such without its particular colour. In this way, there is a perception of the qualifier only, the yellow, as well as another perception of the thing only, the conch-shell. The two cases of perception are distinct but we are unaware of their distinction. Similarly the two objects, the qualifier and the thing, are distinct, but there too we lack the knowledge of their unrelatedness. The result is a fusion in *vyavahāra*, in which the conch-shell appears yellow to us. What is the function of the 'correcting' awareness in such cases? It simply supplies the missing knowledge of their distinction, of their unrelatedness. The so-called 'correcting' (*bādhaka*) awareness supplies only the *gaps* in the previous awareness and thereby sets the matter right! In this way, all cases of awareness, including illusion, would appear as 'object-corresponding' under this theory. Therefore, strictly speaking, no awareness can be incorrect or wrong.

We may ask why, in the case of a so-called perceptual illusion, we have a revival of memory which is really not a *normal* remembering? For in normal remembering we do grasp the object *as being experienced before*. Here this crucial component of a normal remembering is missing. How can we explain this abnormality? The Prābhākara suggests a way out. The Prābhākara, if we recall, believes that a cognitive event, when it is produced by a set of causal factors in normal circumstances, would be naturally a piece of knowledge (Chapter 5). If there is some fault or defect (*doṣa*) present among the causal factors, the result would be a 'defective' cognition, which we call illusion. This, according to the Prābhākara, is how we must explain the abnormality of the said remembering. Although we are actually remembering (i.e. have a memory-revival of) a snake previously experienced, we are not aware that it is a remembering. The defect among causal factors has produced a corresponding defect in the memory-revival itself with the result that we are confused in our speech-behaviour (*vyavahāra*) or the resulting activity and so on. The previously experienced snake lends objective (causal) support to my remembering of it and it is also what is grasped by the same 'remembering'. Hence this remembering is not incorrect. In the same way we can show that the perceptual part is also not incorrect.

I have said that the Prābhākara is a realist. He tries to resolve the puzzlement of an idealist sceptic by meeting him headlong. An idealist or a sceptic may point to a well-known puzzlement. If objects exist

independently of our being aware of them, and if it is in the nature of our awareness to reveal objects, then there should not arise any illusion. And if awareness by nature reveals objects that are not there to begin with, there cannot possibly arise any correct awareness, and there is no possibility of knowledge. The Prābhākara tries to opt for the first alternative and maintains that there are, in fact, no cases of illusion, but only of confusion. Remember the Vasubandhu argument: if in *some* cases of awareness (dreams, hallucinations) we are aware of objects that are not there, at least in the way they appear to us, then *all* cases could be so, for there is no neutral ground for us to distinguish between them. The Prābhākara turns the tables on this position and says that if some cases of awareness make us aware of objects that are there, and are there as they appear to us, then all cases of awareness must be so, for awareness and the factors giving rise to awareness, e.g. sense-faculty etc., cannot change their intrinsic nature of causing true awareness. These cases of so-called illusion are only apparent and can be explained away. In an awareness, be it a remembering, or seeing, or a sensing, sometimes due to some defective causal collocation we may not be aware of as much as we should be or could be, but we are never wrongly aware of something that is not there. There may be omission but no commission.[12]

The Prābhākara does not accept sense-data in the same way as some modern representationalists. The immediate object of perception may be the thing with properties, or simply the particular property without the thing (as in some cases of illusion explained above) or the thing itself without the property. In the last case we may be visually aware of the thing because it *has* a colour and shape but we need not always be aware of this colour or this shape, for we can simply be aware of the thing as such (although such awareness is caused by its having a colour). If the (white) wall is *seen* to be blue through a trick of light, then we see the blue, the particular property which, according to the Prābhākara, belongs to some external object, in this case to the light perhaps: the particular colour belongs not to the wall in front but to the lighting arrangement. Similarly we see the wall without seeing its colour while we are not aware that we are not seeing its colour. We are unaware that we are seeing two objects unrelated to each other, the wall and the particular blue. We are also unaware that there are two cases of seeing each distinct from the other. In this way, illusion is

[12] Vācaspati under NS, 1.1.2 pp. 161–3 (Thakur's edn.).

explained without resorting, in the usual sense, to the sense-datum blue (I assume that a sense-datum in the usual sense is a mental entity). If this blue is called a sense-datum here, it is unquestionably physical, according to the Prābhākara. Besides, by saying that direct grasp of the thing, the material body, is possible without the mediation of the grasping of its colour etc., the Prābhākara is opting for direct realism. Hallucinations and dreams are explained in terms of memory. When Macbeth sees the dagger, if he does, the Prābhākara would say that he is only remembering the previously experienced dagger without being aware that he is only so remembering. Further, he is also confusing the perceptual capacity or capability of his present situation (broad daylight, open eyes etc.) with his 'concealed' remembering. He is unaware of the distinction between the two distinct cases. The dagger that appears in hallucination is therefore an internal object or a mental object in the sense that it is a remembered dagger and the initial experience was caused by a real dagger.

The Prābhākara's analysis of illusion seems unnecessarily complicated, although he is apparently motivated by his faith in realism and hence wishes to avoid positing a set of unwelcome entities called 'appearance' (*pratibhāsa*), distinct from objects in the material world. He rightly emphasizes the role of memory in any non-simple perceptual awareness. As long as we allow that we cannot remember what we never experienced before in some form or other, the role of the objects in the material world (and this includes even properties, features, etc. of things) in generating even *disguised* memories is rightly underlined. But as Vācaspati has remarked the proposed analysis of illusion by the Prābhākara is unnecessarily driven to some ludicrous extremity (cf. *ativyākhyāna*). In other words, the Prābhākara is guilty of 'overkill'. The strenuous effort to split what seems to be a unitary perceptual mode of awareness into two distinct occurrences of awareness, viz. remembering and seeing (where again we are unaware that we are remembering as well as unaware that we are not seeing), is, according to its Nyāya critique, neither necessary nor defensible. It is not necessary, the Nyāya says, since there is a simpler way of explaining illusion. Nor is it defensible because such an explanation cannot account for the origin of human effort and action towards the object grasped in such illusory awareness. For example, even if I misperceive a snake, I immediately act in some way or other such as running away from it. My action is unquestionably prompted by my (false) awareness. Under the Prābhākara analysis, however, we would have to

say that my action is prompted by my *lack* of awareness of the distinctness of the two different cases. Now suppose I pick out the object presented (to me) by my revived memory to make a false attribution to what lies before me but is entirely unrelated to it. I may, of course, make the attribution in either of two ways. I may do it unknowingly, or knowingly (as in a make-belief or fantasy). It is also true that I need not act the same way in each situation. People do not usually act on lack of knowledge but rather under some *positive* certitude or awareness. As Vācaspati emphasizes, 'A conscious being does not act out of lack of awareness, but out of awareness'.[13] Therefore I may lack the required knowledge of the unrelatedness of the two objects, but my positive action comes when I, unknowingly of course, 'mix them together', i.e. superimpose one upon the other.

The Prābhākara could reply that our failure to distinguish these two distinct cases of awareness would make them appear as one; this similarity with one unitary (perceptual) awareness would be enough to prompt us to act. In normal discourse we do say that the person ran away from that false snake because he *did not know*. The Prābhākara says that while the two different types of awareness remain distinct, confusion emerges (shows itelf) when we express them in speech, for we express them as one: 'This is a snake.' The Nyāya answer to this is not very convincing. Vācaspati says that if we can claim that it is possible to treat the two distinct cases of awareness as similar to one unitary awareness when their distinction is not grasped (and as a result our activity or speech-behaviour is made to conform to such a single unitary awareness), then we may as well claim that one unitary awareness could be treated as *similar* to two distinct instances of awareness when identity or the relatedness of its two components is not grasped. And then the speech-behaviour or even our action appropriate to those cases of distinct awareness should also follow. The Prābhākara point is this. The tentative causal rule for action is that *A* and the like of *A* prompt similar action. Although illusion is not a unitary perceptual awareness the situation resembles the case of a unitary perceptual awareness as long as we fail to distinguish between the two distinct cases of awareness. Hence both episodes of awareness prompt us to act in a similar way. The point of Vācaspati's counter-argument is not very clear here. We may, facetiously, interpret the comment in a way that would go in favour of the Prābhākara. Suppose

[13] Ibid., p. 162.

I see something lying on the ground, something that looks like a snake, and thus my memory of a snake is revived but for some unspecified reason I cannot identify or relate the two (for what lies before me *is*, unknown to me, a snake) and thereby cannot be aware that it *is* a snake. This situation would then be similar to my having two distinct cases of awareness, seeing and remembering. And hence the behaviour appropriate to such a situation (with two distinct cases of awareness) would follow. In other words, I would not run away from the place, since I know that my memory-snake cannot bite me. If this is the point of the Nyāya reply, the Prābhākara could very well say: in such a situation the person involved does not usually run away, although other observers may, for they know that there is a snake lying there!

6.5 *The Nyāya Analysis of Illusion:* Anyathākhyāti

I shall now try to expound the Nyāya analysis of illusion, which is called the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory. In fact, some form of *anyathākhyāti* is implied in the attempt of many realists, even in the West. Thus, they avoid unnecessary multiplication of objects which are either abstract, or mental, or intentional. The theory, as I shall show later, is generalized in Nyāya to explain other philosophical problems connected with vacuous names and descriptions which are apparently meaningful, although there is nothing that they name or that answers such descriptions. This is also a relevant analysis in connection with what may be called the old Russell–Meinong controversy over the problem of fictional entities. Part of the philosophic insight that might have prompted Russell to propound his theory of definite description can be seen to be at work as the Nyāya tackles the problem of empty terms in logic by generalizing the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory.[14] For certain problems of perception can be transposed back into the problems of reference. For example, if I cannot *see* a non-existent object, how can I name it, or try to refer to it or describe it? Moreover, the initial name-giving occasion, as the modern (Kripke's) theory of reference would emphasize, requires a 'perceptual' sort of situation (comparable to baptism).

It is well known that a sensory illusion of a snake and a veridical perception of it are very much alike, so that the percipient cannot distinguish between them at the time of experiencing, and yet there is a

[14] B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 123–45. See, for further elaboration of different facets of the issue, A. Chakrabarti, 'Our Talk about Non-existents', Oxford D. Phil. thesis, 1982, Appendix.

basic difference between them which the percipient may quickly learn. A theory of illusion is supposed to account satisfactorily for this likeness as well as difference. Representationalists believe that the acceptance of entities like sense-data makes this explanation simple. It is argued that the likeness is due to the fact that both cases of awareness, one veridical and the other illusory, share a common sensory core, i.e. they both consist of the immediate perception of the same object, viz. a sense-datum, while the difference is due to another fact. In veridical perception the sense-datum being a correct representation or picture of what lies before the perceiver leads to the correct mediate awareness of the object, the snake, while in illusion the datum misleads. Phenomenalism accepts the first explanation of the likeness, but claims that the difference is to be explained in terms of the coherence (or lack of it) of the particular datum with the others in the web of data; if the datum is a 'misfit' (*visaṃvādin*), the awareness is an illusion. For example, Dharmakīrti defined correct awareness as that which does not run counter to any other relevant awareness or action (cf. *avisaṃvādakatva*). If I see a piece of silver and later on lift it and place it in my palm, and conduct several tests, all these behaviour-episodes would have to cohere with the first awareness of the piece of silver. If they do, the veracity of the perception is established, if they do not, the awareness is illusory. This also shows why the Buddhist may agree with Nyāya in maintaining that knowledge-hood is known 'otherwise' (*parataḥ*) i.e. not when the awareness is known (see Chapter 4) but when successful activity follows.

Dharmakīrti uses the example of a jewel and a lamp, both being hidden from the eye and emitting rays. This simile can be exploited in favour of both the representationalist and the phenomenalist. We see the rays, the same (or similar) rays in both cases, and we may in both cases approach the object. If I approach with the awareness that it is a jewel and obtain a lamp at the end of the line, then the object does not 'fit' or does not perform its expected role (*arthakriyā*) as a jewel. Or I may rush with the awareness that it is a lamp and obtain a jewel. In that case, it does not do its job either. Both cases exemplify illusion. But if I rush with the awareness that it is a jewel and a jewel is what I obtain, then it is known to be veridical.[15]

Nyāya says that the theory that is called 'misplacement' (*anyathā-khyāti*) can give a much simpler explanation than the above. It explains

[15] Dharmakīrti (PV), *Pratyakṣa* chapter verse 57.

the likeness between two cases of snake perception, illusory and veridical, by referring to the similarity of properties, features, aspects, etc. between the two objects, one of which (a rope) I see, and the other of which (the snake) I misperceive. Obviously there will be little chance of misperceiving *A* while *B* lies before me unless there is some similarity of features etc. between *A* and *B*. I cannot mistake a mustard seed for an elephant, for example. These features etc., we must note, are not odd sorts of entities such as sense-data. They are attributable to the material object we see, or to the physical environment etc. They are not sense-impressions private to the percipient but rather in most cases observable features of the external world. Some sense-data philosophers believe that sense-data are physical, or part of the material world, and hence it may be claimed that what they are saying does not differ from the position I am defending here. G. E. Moore, for example, would consider that sense-data are 'properties' of the material object, sometimes of the visible (front) part of the opaque physical object.[16] It is important to realize the difference here. The features, properties, parts, and so on which I am invoking as the basis of similarity are attributable (in fact, they may be said to belong) to the material object in the same way as some philosophers would attribute sense-data to the material object, or to the physical occupant. But what the sense-data philosophers say, and Nyāya does not say, is that they are also the objects of our immediate perception, on the basis of which perception we *see* the material object. The Nyāya position is that we see the opaque physical object, the piece of silver for example, *because of the presence of these properties*, but not necessarily because we first *see* these properties, features, parts, etc. as a preliminary to the second, mediate perception. The shining white feature *causes* me to *see* the piece of silver, and sometimes a similar feature shared by another object, a piece of shell, may *cause* my perception, i.e. misperception, of silver. This likeness between a veridical perception and an illusion leads us to mistake one for the other.

The point made in the last paragraph may be elaborated. It is usually believed by sense-data philosophers, as it was by the Buddhists, that we first see the colour of the object (say the red of my car) and then through the mediation of this seeing, we 'see' (or at least we think we 'see') the car. When under neon-light the red is changed into purple and I see the purple, I may *doubt* whether it is really my car. Somewhat

[16] G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 31–96.

in this way, sense-data philosophers like H. H. Price would argue in favour of a direct or immediate perception of a red or purple patch with a certain bulgy shape: 'When I see a tomato there is much that I can *doubt*. I can doubt whether it is a tomato that I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can *doubt* whether there is any material thing there at all.'[17] In my example of an illusory case, I can doubt whether it is not another car but I cannot doubt my seeing immediately a purple patch with a certain bulgy shape. But must I *see* the colour always and invariably before I see my car? Could it not be the case that I walk to my car *seeing* that it is there without thinking (i.e. seeing) even what colour it has now? Frequently I *see* my car without even stopping to look at the colour. This does not mean that the car has become colourless all of a sudden. Nor does it mean that I can or could see it even if it did not have a colour. For, as Nyāya has emphasized (and I repeat for emphasis), I see it *because* it has a colour, but not necessarily because I *see* that colour. Of course I see the colour also, because it is there to be seen. But unless my perception is propositional (in the Chisholmian sense)[18] so that I see that the car is red (or that it is a red car), I do not need the immediate and independent perception of the red to 'mediate' in my perception of the car itself. Suppose I am sitting by my desk near the window, and I notice (i.e. look up, *see*) whenever a car passes by. Now you come in and ask me: 'Did you see that car that passed by a moment ago?' I can truthfully answer 'Yes, I did'. You may then ask, 'What colour was it?' And I can still truthfully reply, 'I did not see (notice) its colour'. I would not have been able to see it, however, if it had been an uncoloured (invisible) car (like the invisible man in science fiction). Therefore it stands to reason to say that I saw the car (because it had a colour) but did not see its colour. It can of course be argued that I saw the colour because it was there even though I now think I did not. I am reminded here of an old Bengali joke: A physician asks his prospective patient, 'Do you have a headache in the morning?' The patient replies, 'No sir'. And the physician says, 'Of course you have it every morning, but you are not able to know it'.[19]

According to the 'misplacement' (*anyathākhyāti*) theory, the snake I see in my illusion is a real snake (an existent entity), and does not

[17] H. H. Price, p. 3; my emphasis. I shall ignore in the context the much-debated question of primary-secondary qualities as well as what modern science says about colour etc.

[18] R. Chisholm, *Perceiving*, pp. 3 and 164 ff.

[19] Paraśurām, *Cikitsāvibhrāt: 'hai hai zānti pāro nā.'*

belong to the separate class of (mental) existents like the class of sense-data; it is part of the already existent snake community, part of the 'furniture' of this material world. To understand this argument, we have to consider several other points; in so doing, we can also explain the difference that is there between the two cases of awareness, veridical and illusory.

First, the 'perceived' character of the snake in our sensory illusion cannot be easily dismissed or underplayed. Nyāya therefore rightly rebukes the Prābhākara for trying to undermine this fact and to turn what is a genuine case of perception (though not a case of *genuine* perception) into something different (a case of remembering only) by a tortuous explanation (cf. *ativyākhyā*, Vācaspati). The Buddhist, the phenomenalist, and also the representationalist are therefore right in insisting upon this 'perceived' character of the experience in illusion. The Prābhākara is also right in talking about past experience and memory-revival in the context of illusion. If we follow this lead, we can avoid the insecure and rather debatable realm of sense-data, percepts, appearances (*pratibhāsa*), and 'forms' (*ākāra*).

Second, the role of past experience, acquired concepts, anticipations, habitual association etc. in generating a present perceptual knowledge and by the same token a perceptual illusion, can hardly be overestimated. Possibly excluding a few days in early childhood, we constantly build upon our past experience—a process that probably never ends. In each non-simple perception, in each *seeing-as*, I constantly draw upon my previous experience knowingly or (more often) unknowingly. I can probably *see* (as a child does) a snake as something without any past experience or previous association with a snake either by perception or by a picture or by some description. But I cannot see something *as* a snake unless I am aided by past experience, concept, etc. By the same token, I cannot very well misperceive, i.e. see what is not a snake *as* a snake without such aid. Therefore, a shared causal factor of both my veridical and illusory perception of a snake would be my acquired snake-concept or past experience of a snake or snakes.

Third, I have already mentioned that according to Nyāya the piece of silver we *see* in a 'shell-silver' illusion situation does not lie outside the silver bullion of this material world, but in fact it is a part of it. By the same token, the snake in the 'rope-snake' illusion, the purple that covers my red car in neon light, my bitter taste of sugar when I am suffering from jaundice, and the dagger in Macbeth's hallucination—

all are part of this world we know best. The problem here is to explain how I can see (or perceive) these objects which are not present or connected (physically) with my sense-faculty. Nyāya, in partial agreement with the Prābhākara, invokes the service of past experience and memory. The revived memory triggered off by the similarity of shared character brings in its wake the object of the past experience. The object of the past experience cannot enter the visual field *physically* for the eyes to see, but it can have a 'non-physical' connection (*alaukika sannikarṣa*) with the eyes to make it possible for us to perceive (i.e. misperceive). It is not an image or a shadow that we perceive in illusion. For that is not the meaning or implication of the expression 'non-physical' here. Revived memory presents the object *non-physically* to allow the sense-faculty to communicate or consider it. And in this way it appears in perception (or rather misperception) as a characteristic or a qualifier.

Fourth, illusion, as I have emphasized, is a non-simple perception. Therefore it can potentially deliver a judgement. Such a judgement can be interpreted as either identifying or predicative (or attributive). If it is the former, 'this is silver' has to be interpreted as 'this = a piece of silver'. If the latter, it should be interpreted as 'this has silverness or silver-essence' or 'this belongs to the silver-kind'. Now we have of course been familiar with silver or some piece of it for a long time from seeing it in old coins and spoons or in a silversmith's shop (cf. *vaṇig-vīthyādau*, Vācaspati).[20] Memory presents some (indefinite) familiar silver, which, though it is not physically present, can enter into a non-physical relation with the sense-faculty. Such a 'non-physical' relation (*sannikarṣa*) with the sense-faculty would be enough to make a perception possible.

Fifth, can I *see* cold ice or a fragrant flower? One way to answer this is to say no. For it will be explained that we *see* the ice and the flower and *infer* the coldness and fragrance from past associations, though such inferences are very rapidly made. I think, along with Nyāya, that this way of answering the question is not satisfactory. For sometimes I unmistakably seem to *see* the fragrant jasmine and the cold ice! I *see* a sweet fruit and my mouth immediately waters. To say that a quick process of inference intervenes here is to accept only a poor theory. Nyāya takes all these as cases of perception (seeing), and veridical cases at that. The explanation here follows the previous model of

[20] Vācaspati, p. 160 (Thakur's edn.).

memory presentation and the resulting 'non-physical' connection with the visual sense organ. Thus it is that the model of memory presentation and 'non-physical' connection is invoked not simply to explain the problem of sensory illusion. In other words, the model is not devised in desperation, to save realism against the argument from illusion. The model has more explanatory power, for it explains standard cases of illusion as well as some veridical perception. Properties like fragrance, coldness, and sweetness, by definition cannot have any 'physcial' connection with the eye (cf. *vyavasthā* theory).[21] Hence it is said that memory acts as a 'go-between' in generating correct perceptual knowledge. Memory provides the *non-physical* connection here.

Sixth, there is one important difference, according to Nyāya, between the 'physical' connection with the visual organ and the memory-intervened 'non-physical' connection. In a non-simple perception (obviously the question of memory-intervened perceptual connection does not arise in the case of simple perception), whatever is 'physically' connected with the visual organ can either play the role of a *dharmin* (a qualificand) or that of a *dharma* (a qualifier). If, however, something has the memory-induced 'non-physical' connection with the visual organ, it must always play the role of a qualifier or a characteristic. In other words, what is 'physically' connected can be either the 'chief' or the 'subordinate' (to use our previous terminology), but what is 'non-physically' presented (cf. *upanīta*) must always take the subordinate role. If I look outside the window and am asked 'what do you see?', I could answer, 'I see the car', 'I see the red car', 'I see that the car is red', 'I see the red (colour) of the car', 'I see that red colour characterizes the car', and so on. Similarly I can answer 'I see the jasmine', 'I see the fragrant jasmine', 'I see cold snow' and so on, but according to Nyāya, I would never say 'I see the fragrance of the jasmine' or 'I see coldness qualifying the snow'. In perceptions of this kind, the object (jasmine, snow, sugar) that is physically connected with the eye must be given the prime role of the qualificand or 'chief' in the object-complex. In its verbal report, therefore, the 'chief' occupies the position of the substantive (the 'subject') while the 'non-

[21] The *vyavasthā* theory states that there is always a unique object for each 'means' of awareness such that what is grasped by one cannot be grasped by another. We cannot 'hear' sound through our faculty of taste! The Buddhist believes that this is true of all sense-faculties and the faculty of 'mind' as well, while Nyāya argues that there is no *vyavasthā* 'restriction' with regard to the sense of touch and vision. We can see and touch the same table! See also 6.6. For more on this point see Vātsyāyana under NS, 1.1.1.

physically' presented element turns into an adjective or a 'predicate'.

Seventh, this brings us to another important characteristic of a non-simple awareness. It has been said that perceptual illusion is possible only in the case of a non-simple awareness where there is a 'chief' along with a 'subordinate' in the object-complex, a thing that is being characterized and what characterizes it (a 'subject' and a 'predicate'). If the characteristic ('subordinate') mis-characterizes the 'chief', we have an illusion. The characteristic (that which plays the role of the characteristic) is supplied in such cases by the above-mentioned memory-induced 'non-physical' connection. We have pointed out above that whatever is presented to the sense-faculty in this way can only play the role of a characteristic. Therefore in illusion a previously experienced silver-piece is being identified (subordinately, predicatively) with the subject of my visual experience. This, by implication, shows that nothing can go wrong with the 'chief' in any perceptual situation. For what plays the role of the 'chief' must necessarily be physically connected with the visual organ. If the object (which plays the role of the 'chief') is connected physically with the sense-faculty and if I *see* it, what else can go wrong? This means that I can never misperceive the object that plays the role of the 'chief' (the 'subject'); I can misperceive in so far as its characterization is concerned. This point is stated in Nyāya by the commonly accepted dictum: all cases of awareness (non-simple) would be correct, in fact, unerring, as far as the 'chief' is concerned but they might be wrong with regard to the characteristic that characterizes the 'chief'.[22]

6.6 *Explanation of Fiction and Fantasies*

In its simplest form, the 'misplacement' theory (*anyathākhyāti*) asserts that error or perceptual illusion is the misplacement of a real F in a real X. The basic assumption in this theory is that nothing appears in our visual perceptual awareness, which is not also existent or real (that is objectively real in some way or other). If something seems to be an entirely *unfamiliar* object appearing in our dreams, hallucinations, wildest imaginations or, in any other apparently perceptual mode of awareness, this unfamiliarity, outlandishness, or the out-of-the-world characteristic is only apparent, according to Nyāya, for proper and careful analysis will show that it is constructed out of only the *familiar*

[22] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi*, p. 81 (Thakur's edn.). The principle might be in line with the intention behind a familiar principle in the Western logical tradition: $Fa \supset (\exists x)(x = a)$. See Hintikka (1962); also A. Kenny, p. 61 and B. Williams, p. 92.

bits and pieces. In other words, the unfamiliar objects in a dream can be broken down to elements that have been already objects of our past acquaintance in some way or other. The so-called non-existent is therefore constructed by us out of the existents—existents that have been experienced by us already. In imagination, fantasies, and dreams it is our unconscious memory or unconscious reminiscence that is at work. If we do not ascribe separate existential status to the objects of memory, derivative of the objects of past experience, we need not worry about ontological economy in this theory. This seems to be an advantage over the sense-data theory, where a separate class of entities with dubious ontological status has somehow to be conceded. In imagination etc., in this theory, we draw unconsciously from our 'memory-bank'. However the notion of the object of memory and past experience raises the problem of intentionality, or 'intentional inexistence' as Brentano called it. (See Chapter 4.6.)

So far in our analysis we have taken the standard cases of perceptual illusion. Such cases as the 'rope-snake' or the 'shell-silver' situation are paradigm cases. In fact the Nyāya analysis in terms of similarity and memory-revival works well for such cases. But there are many other types of illusion which are difficult to explain in terms of similarity and unconscious reminiscing.[23] For example, the shiny property (*cākacikyādi*, Udayana) is the point of similarity between the shell and a piece of silver, and that which may rightly revive my memory of silver. But it is not at all clear how we can speak in this manner of a similarity between the ascript (*āropya*) and the object to which it is ascribed (*āropa-viṣaya*) when I misperceive, for example, that the (white) conch-shell is yellow, under the influence of disease. We do not ascribe or superimpose a yellow thing upon the white conch-shell. Nor do we ascribe yellow colour to white colour, for white colour has not been the object of visual awareness here at all. On the whole, we have to say that we ascribe yellow to the conch-shell. But then where is the supposed similarity between them? Anticipating such an objection, Vācaspati has given an answer. The percipient is aware of only the colour yellow belonging to the disease (we may compare it with coloured glass), but he does not recognize the object to which it belongs. He is also aware of the conch-shell whose white colour is hidden from his eye, as it were, owing to the disease (or the presence of the yellow glass). At the same time he is unaware that the yellow colour he sees is unconnected

[23] Vācaspati and Udayana under NS 1.1.2 (Thakur's edn., p. 175).

with the conch-shell he sees. However, he remembers a situation similar to this, in which he perceived a ripe *bilva* (or *vilva*) fruit as yellow, which presents him with the ingredient to misperceive and say 'this is yellow'. The ascript here is a relation, as Udayana emphasizes. It is a connectedness which picks out *two* unconnected objects, the conch-shell and yellow colour to which the ascription is being made (cf. *āropa-viṣayau*). A similar analysis is proposed when I taste sugar as bitter. According to Nyāya direct realism, however, I cannot taste sugar directly as a thing. In fact only two faculties, that of vision and touch, are said to have the power to apprehend the material thing (body) directly. Hearing, smelling, and tasting can grasp only the relevant properties, not the things. Therefore, 'I hear a coach' (Berkeley's example, much discussed by Armstrong and Jackson[24] from different points of view), 'I smell a jasmine', and 'I taste food' are all to be differently reformulated in Nyāya. When sugar tastes bitter, this is how it is supposed to happen, according to Vācaspati: I perceive sugar by tongue, but some ailment prevents me from tasting its sweetness (note also that tasteless sugar would be like 'colourless conch-shell'). On the other hand, I taste a bitter taste that belongs to *pitta* (i.e. the disease). This situation evokes the past experience of a bitter-tasting *nimba* fruit. Thereafter in the way described above we ascribe connectedness to the situation which in turn picks out the unconnected sugar and bitter taste. The ascript here is the connectedness, and the object to which it is ascribed is a pair, the lump of sugar and the unconnected bitter taste present in the disease.[25]

A simple illusion is a misplacement or misconnection of the two unconnected entities—one is the ascript and the other is the object to which the ascription is made in the resulting judgement. There are two sides to the *ascription*: the ascript (*āropya*) and the 'object of ascription' (*āropa-viṣaya*), i.e. the object to which the former is ascribed. Nyāya emphasized that any entity belonging to either side of this type of ascription is real and existent and part of this world. The ascription itself is part of the imaginative construction (aided by past experience) or *vikalpa*, which is the general feature of any non-simple perception. (For *vikalpa*, see Chapters 8 and 10.) This ascription or misconnection can be accounted for, Nyāya believes, by probing into material, i.e.

[24] D. W. Armstrong, p. 20. Also F. Jackson, pp. 7–8.

[25] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi*, p. 137 (Thakur's edn.). Vācaspati uses the example '*kācasyeva*' where *kāca* means a kind of eye-disease. I have taken the liberty of using a modern example, that of a coloured glass.

physical and physiological, as well as some psychological factors such as memory, unique to each type of illusion. I say 'psychological' with tongue in cheek, for a psychological factor here should not be confused as being a reference to sense-impression or sense-data which are, some representationalists argue,[26] mental entities. Psychological factors mean here any vestiges of past experience that may creatively contribute to any non-simple perception. Incidentally, Nyāya direct realism does not necessarily lead to modern materialistic behaviourism in which all mental episodes or states must be identified with some physical behaviour or some neuro-physiological states. Hence ordinary mental occurrences are accepted as separate facts in Nyāya.

Similarity can be a material (or objective) feature. It is not always the perceived similarity, but the mere presence of similarity in the objects themselves that triggers off the perception sometimes rightly and sometimes wrongly. A question is raised by Vācaspati: since it is possible to say that any object is similar to any other in some respect or other (for example, two very dissimilar things can also be said to be similar simply in that both are at least existent, *sat*), what kind or degree of similarity would trigger off a perceptual attribution? The answer is that there cannot be any restrictive rule (*niyama*) in this case, for it varies from person to person, object to object, situation to situation. Suppose an object has a cluster of properties, features, determined by my past experience: *a*, *b*, *c*, . . . The presence of any one of these or any combination chosen from this set could trigger off my perceptional ascription aided or unaided by other factors. Sometimes my eager expectation to see my friend would be enough to trigger off a perceptual attribution to, or misidentification of, another person wearing, for example, the same sort of coat in a crowd. This 'anomaly' (i.e. lack of any restrictive rule) is in fact a characteristic of a mental occurrence.

Perceptual illusion can be of various types. It seems that the Nyāya explanatory model fits in very well with what we may call *imaginative* error. The standard examples are a 'shell-silver' situation and a 'rope-snake' situation. The role of similarity and imaginative attribution is almost paradigmatic in such cases. The second type can be called objective or situational or conditional error. Here the whole situation seems to be manipulative. The examples are tasting bitterness in sugar, seeing yellow in a conch-shell, etc. These must be explained through a

[26] e.g. F. Jackson, pp. 50–87.

careful analysis of the individual situation. I have given above Vācaspati's analysis of the two examples. There are other examples where 'imaginative' attribution may be properly analysed following the lead of Vācaspati: the bent stick in water (mentioned by Udayana), mirror illusion (mentioned by Vardhamāna), double moon, false motion of trees when one moves by a vehicle etc. (Dharmakīrti).[27] There are obvious difficulties if we use just one model of analysis for different types of error. We need not delve into the problem here. However, it may be presumed that with modern knowledge of physics, physiology, optics, etc. some sort of analysis of each situation would be possible (and this analysis may or may not coincide with the scientist's analysis) from the Nyāya point of view, for, we can set aside some item or items forming the set of ascripts and another set of items to which ascription is being made. Now, while the two are unconnected, perceptual attribution on the basis of some vestiges of past experience could connect (i.e. misconnect) them. This analysis of the actually unconnected *ascript* and *subject* in each misperception is the basis of the Nyāya 'misplacement' theory. Causal factors of each (wrong) attribution may be different. In hallucinations, and other psychotic conditions we can count an ardent desire or intensity of fear among their causal factors. The real object of the past experience (e.g. the real dagger for Macbeth) is the *ascript* ascribed to the actually *unconnected* (1) empty space (in front of the percipient) and (2) the present time. The combination of the latter two would be the *subject* (*viṣaya*) of ascription, i.e. the object to which ascription is being made. Sanskrit philosophers, it should be noted, instead of the Macbeth example (of which, alas, they were unaware), frequently refer to the hallucination of the beloved by the lovelorn lover during long separation (*viraha*).

It should be noted here that in spite of Vācaspati's bold attempt to apply a single model of analysis (that of *ascription* of a remembered object upon a perceived object, induced by similarity) to both types of illusion, other Naiyāyikas would beg to differ. They divide illusions into those which run counter to another (succeeding) perception, e.g. the 'rope-snake' illusion, and those which run counter to other (non-perceptual) evidence, e.g. double moon (*prātyakṣika tiraskāra* and *yauktika tiraskāra*). Some Naiyāyikas would suggest a different model of analysis for the second type. For example, they would say that we

[27] For Vardhamāna see *Nibandha-prakāśa* on Udayana's *Pariśuddhi* Bibliotheca Indica edn., p. 396). For Dharmakīrti, see *Nyāyabindu*, p. 12.

need not take recourse to remembrance or similarity in these cases. This will be clear in the next section.

6.7 *Sense-datum versus Direct Realism*

Udayana has emphasized that we mis-ascribe connectedness (= relation), that is, we 'misconnect' the unconnected, and the lack of awareness of their unconnectedness has been cited as an auxiliary factor. Here, however, Nyāya seems to concede the insight of the Prābhākara analysis where such lack of awareness is rightly emphasized. (For more on the Prābhākara, see below.) There are further problems with the Nyāya view of ascription. First, if we were to ascribe a relation to the two unconnected entities in the above manner then the structure of the illusory awareness would be 'the conch-shell and this yellow are connected', and not 'the conch-shell is yellow'. Vardhamāna explains in reply: it is the nature of any relation to try to pick out two available items *as* related, provided a relation between them is, if not actual, at least possible. Here similarity plays the role of a relation, for this yellow colour is a particular feature and this conch-shell is a thing, and therefore it presents a situation where a relation is possible (between the thing and the feature).[28]

However it raises the question: what is this relation that we are ascribing? Is it general relatedness? If so, then the awareness would no longer be an error, for two unconnected items can have some very general relation between them, for we can ingeniously formulate a chain of relation to show some connection in some way. (In fact, according to the Nyāya concept of 'relation', in general, anything can be related to anything else.) Do we ascribe the specific relation that is possible, in this case, between the thing and the feature, viz. inherence? We do not, for our illusion here persists even when we know that the conch-shell cannot be yellow. Vardharmāna resolves this by saying that we ascribe here a unique relation between the two items, a relation that may not pick out any other ordered pair (in other words, a relation-particular).

Are we not then creating a new thing, a (non-existent) relation-particular? The answer, I believe, would have to be 'yes', and Nyāya would probably say that this is a minimal creation that we must attribute to the creative faculty of 'imagination' (*vikalpa*), which is certainly at play in perceptual illusion. I have already made this point while

[28] Vardhamāna, p. 394.

discussing the Buddhist theory of 'the revelation of the non-existent'. The main constituents of the object in illusion may be considered parts of this actual world and presented either by memory or by the occasion under which illusion occurs. But the particular connection that ties them up in illusion is only a possible, but not actual (and hence a 'non-existent' *asat*) entity.

It has already been noted that it is not always the *perceived* similarity that gives rise to illusion. It may be asked: When is similarity to be perceived in order for it to be a factor in generating illusion? Vardhamāna gives an answer. We may ascribe either an identity or a characteristic. In other words, our illusory judgement may be either identificatory or predicative. If our judgement admits the form 'this = a piece of silver', that is, if we identify what lies before us with a piece of silver, then similarity between the two has to be perceived. But if we ascribe a characteristic, that is, if our judgement admits the form 'this has silverness', then the mere presence of similarity would be enough to trigger off *mis*perception. The former, it may be noted, is a more complex judgement than the latter, and hence Vardhamāna, in pointing this out, shows his own logical insight. To perceptually affirm of something that it is identical with a piece of silver we must be *aware* that the piece resembles a piece of silver in essential respects, but mere presence of some similarity may induce a perception of something as a piece of silver.

Some argue that it is possible to dismiss similarity as a relevant factor for each case of illusion. For what is needed is the presentation of the ascript in some way or other. It is not always that similarity reminds us of the ascript, for sometimes the ascripts may be *perceptually* present. For example, the physiological condition (disease, drunkenness, etc.) will make the percipient *see* pink rats without any intervention of the revival of memory due to similarity. Vardhamāna reports that there are two views on this matter. One holds that when we identify through mistake the object before us with a piece of silver, then it is the *perceived* similarity that presents the piece of silver in the form of a disguised reminiscence. The other holds that when similarity is the only defect (*doṣa*) of the situation, i.e. the only relevant factor for the resulting misperception, then similarity may present the ascript from the 'memory bank'. But the second view further claims that in the case of other physiological conditions, such as disease, the presentation of the ascript, yellow for example, is *perceptual* (*pratyakṣād eva*) and

there is no need in our explanation to invoke the service of similarity.[29]

In later Nyāya there is a tension between these two types of interpretation of illusion. In some cases of illusion (disease, tricky lighting, drunkenness) the misperception is felt so instantaneously and directly that recourse to the chain-device of similarity, remembrance, and ascription seems unnecessary. In such cases, the ascript is said to be perceptually presented, rather than through reminiscence. It is also wrong to say that when my jaundiced eye sees yellow I remember a past experience of yellow. The yellow is perceived first before we get to the stage of ascription, that is, the stage of associating yellow with the conch-shell resulting in a non-simple perception. This analysis apparently goes against the elaborate analysis of Vācaspati as explained earlier. According to Vācaspati, yellow is doubtless seen in such cases but we do not ascribe it to the conch-shell. We ascribe or concoct a connection which picks out two unconnected objects, conch-shell and yellow.

Sense-data philosophers, especially those who take sense-data to be part of the physical world, would not find much to dispute with the Nyāya analysis here. For example, G. E. Moore and C. D. Broad have argued that our visual datum is the front part of the opaque physical object.[30] As long as what is seen is identified with some part of the physical and neuro-physiological world, I think Nyāya would not find it problematic. For clearly the existence of these items is not *essentially* dependent upon their being perceived. That my car looks purple under neon can be seen by a number of people. Neuro-physiological conditions may not be public in this way, but this need not present any problem. If I have jaundice my eye will see yellow where yours will not. But if you have jaundice you will see the same or similar yellow, i.e. the *yellow* of your disease. In other words, the yellow is as much shared by us as the disease. It is reported that not one but several drunkards, not always at the same time, see pink rats on their white beds! Likewise the round plate looks elliptical to me while I am sitting in this chair in the same way as it does to another observer when he sits here, provided nothing else changes. Nyāya would find all these physical and

[29] Ibid., p. 397. Note in this connection the strong realistic claim of H. P. Grice: 'any justification of a particular perceptual claim will rely on the truth of one or more further propositions about the material world (for example, about the percipient's body)' (p. 471 in Swartz's anthology).

[30] G. E. Moore (1953), pp. 31–98; C. D. Broad, pp. 29–48 (in Swartz's anthology).

physiological data acceptable, provided two other assumptions do not go along with it: (i) these are the objects we must necessarily see in our *immediate* perception, and the physical world appears in its full glory when we see 'through' them, that is in our so-called *mediate* perception; (ii) there is little point in taking these objects to be *actually* there when nobody is perceiving them. Nyāya unequivocally rejects these two assumptions.

Some sense-data philosophers may argue in favour of the possibility of *unsensed* sense-data. At the extreme was Mill's view who defined substance as the 'permanent possibility of sensation'. If this means that Mill rejected the second assumption, this would be welcomed by Nyāya. But the point of Nyāya is that these data are *actual*, not possible, so that we do not need a perception to take place to show that they are possible. The sense-data philosophers, however, were more inclined to save phenomenalism from the alleged criticism that it does violence to common sense. But they would then have to concede that without any perceiver the sensible world would vanish into nothingness! Probably their point was that these possibilities exist independently of any perceiver to make them *actual*. Nere Nyāya would beg to differ. Naiyāyikas argue that we do not *necessarily* see the physical world through such data, although we may do so on occasion. For we can see the physical world even directly. In the 'bent-stick' example (which Udayana mentions) a new *physical* bent stick is not created, but the property of 'bentness' belonging to the interaction of light and water (for Udayana, water waves) is transferred to the straight stick whose straightness is there hidden, much in the same way as yellow belonging to the yellow glass through which I am seeing is transferred to the white wall whose white then becomes hidden.

The Nyāya position has some similarity here with the 'multiple location' defence of naïve or direct realism—a theory that H. H. Price has ascribed to Whitehead.[31] According to this theory, a simple material object, such as a penny, 'is really a sort of infinitely various porcupine, which is not merely here in this room (as we commonly take it to be) but sticks out as it were in all directions and to all sorts of distances, "from" all of which it has its being and is qualified in various ways, whether present to any one's sense or not.' However, this similarity with Nyāya need not be overemphasized. For Nyāya would not go so far as to take a penny to be a 'porcupine' unless there are also

[31] H. H. Price, pp. 55 ff.

infinitely various percipients, at the same time, looking at the same penny from all directions and all sorts of distances. Since this is not what *actually* happens, Nyāya would not accept the suggestion of a penny being actually a 'porcupine'. Nyāya would, however, allow that some objective *external* particulars (features, things, properties or whatever) may be produced temporarily in the cases under consideration (i.e. in the second type of perceptual illusion). Further, in the production of such temporary (in fact momentary) particulars, the percipient certainly plays some part (he is included in the set of 'causal' factors). When two persons looking at a penny *see* two different shapes due to their positions, etc., they help to create two different (objective and external) shapes which are then ascribed to the penny they actually see. These two created shapes do not belong to the penny, but are only attributed to it by different viewers. Hence there is no contradiction in saying that when the two percipients cease to perceive the penny in this way those 'objective' and 'external' particulars, those two shapes, also cease to exist. For if the sets of *supporting* causal factors are disturbed, the effects (those two shapes) are destroyed thereby. When nobody is looking at the penny, it shines in its own glory with its one and only shape! Hence, a penny cannot be a 'porcupine' in Nyāya.

What is the nature of these objective, external particulars which are also momentary and dependent upon the percipient's perceiving? Are they similar to the sense-data? If acceptance of sense-data means only acceptance of such temporary, external objects, there may not be any quarrel between Nyāya and the sense-data theorist in this matter. In fact the ontological status of these 'objective' particulars in Nyāya is very intriguing. It is claimed (in Nyāya) that an external objective reality can be created by a set of causal factors, of which a mental event can be a crucial member. The life (duration) of such external entity is short because the crucial mental event is also shortlived. In the Nyāya system, numbers such as two, three, or a thousand are *created* in this way as objective external facts by the co-operation of some mental event. The crucial mental event that generates such numbers is called *apekṣā-buddhi* (a 'count-orientated' cognitive episode). Such numbers die as fast as the corresponding cognitive episodes disappear. Similarly, another episode called 'sensing' may be regarded as a causal factor for generating the said objective, external particulars, the blue-blur, etc. But these do not exist when no observer is present.

How do these particulars differ from the sense-data? First, they are not *mental*, but external objects, although they have been *anomalously*

created by a mental episode as one of its causal factors.[32] Most sense-data philosophers take sense-data to be mental, but the Naiyāyika's particulars are not in the 'head' of any person. Second, they are according to Nyāya not direct and immediate objects of perception, but only ascribed to the 'main' object of perception. He who sees an elliptical penny does not see the elliptical shape first, by virtue of which he sees the penny. He sees *simply* the penny *as* elliptical. Third, these particulars are not in any case part of the surface of the object of perception. They do not belong to the object but are only attributed to it. This shows that even those who would like to make sense-data part of the surface of the object perceived would not agree with the Nyāya view about these anomalous particulars. (See also Chapter 12.4.)

D. W. Armstrong, with a view to supporting direct realism, has given an analysis of sensory illusion in terms of *false* belief or inclination to believe falsely that we are perceiving, that is, veridically perceiving, some physical object or state of affairs.[33] To have a sense-impression, according to him, is to believe, or be inclined to believe, that we are *immediately* perceiving something, some physical object or state of affairs. Most of what he says in the relevant chapter would seem to be acceptable to Nyāya. It is, however, difficult to see how by calling or identifying all perceptual illusion as mere false beliefs or even inclination to such beliefs, we can resolve the whole issue. According to this view, we do not actually *perceive*, although we may *think* we perceive, when we suffer from an illusion. It seems to me that Armstrong in this respect makes the same mistake as the Prābhākara who explains that in a perceptual illusion of silver we really do not *perceive* the silver (although we *think* we do). Although the Prābhākara analysis is entirely different, as we have seen above, there seems to be an agreement in this respect. In their eagerness to save realism, both the Prābhākara and Armstrong seem to undermine the *perceived* character of our experience of silver in illusion. It becomes highly counter-intuitive if in order to account for or explain the phenomenon of perceptual illusion we simply say that there is no perceptual illusion for which explanation may be needed. Besides, Nyāya will say that in the case of perceptual illusion we have also an 'inward perception' (an

[32] I borrow this term from D. Davidson. See his essay, 'Mental Events', for his formulation of anomalous monism. Nyāya seems to be anomalously monistic, not dualistic in the Cartesian sense. In using this phrase, however, I do not wish to ascribe D. Davidson's view to Nyāya. The agreement is more generic than specific.

[33] D. W. Armstrong, pp. 80–98.

anuvyavasāya) that we have had an (external) perception. In other words, we not only reach a judgement of the form 'this is silver' but also in the next moment another inward judgement of the form 'I perceive that this is silver'. This, for Nyāya, seems to supply stronger experiential evidence in favour of the perceptual character of the experience. Such evidence cannot be lightly brushed aside. In other words, Nyāya would claim that when I visually see the double moon, I also *inwardly* perceive in the next moment that I see visually, and this needs an explanation. Our disposition, that is, belief or inclination to believe, may be the result of an experience, but certainly not simply a substitute for such experience. Vācaspati's charge of 'overkill' (cf. *ativyākhyāna*) against the Prābhākara would apply equally well against Armstrong.

There is an agreement between Armstrong and the Prābhākara in another significant respect. The Prābhākara rightly emphasizes the factor he calls 'our lack of awareness of the distinctness of the two experiences, seeing and reminiscing'. If we are unaware of this distinction we will naturally be more inclined to confuse the two as one experience, perceiving, and in this way it would be possible to say that we believe (falsely) that we perceive when we do not actually perceive. The Prābhākara, however, would not say that it is our experience which mixes the two. Rather the claim is that our description of the experience, our speech-behaviour, *mixes* them inadvertently. The Prābhākara, however, is quite clear about the *perceived* part of the experience, for as sensory illusion is a non-simple awareness it contains the minimal perceptual part when we are confronted with the object and we see it; we see the piece of shell, though not as a piece of shell. Armstrong argues that he maintains, in his explanation, the ordinary usage of 'perceive', according to which, 'what is perceived must have physical existence'. This is also the problem before the Prābhākara as well as Nyāya. The Prābhākara insists that there is no real illusion, for the perceived object, the 'thing' (*dharmin*), i.e. the shell, exists, much as the remembered piece of silver did when it was perceived. Nyāya also agrees with the Prābhākara in this respect. But Nyāya adds that the resulting event is not a confusion or conflation in our speech-behaviour of two different cases of awareness; rather it is one single case, which, though not veridical, is perceptual in character. In illusory perception, disconnected entities get connected falsely, but those disconnected entities are real entities. Thus there is more than one way to maintain the common-sense intuition about the ordinary

usage or sense of the verb 'perceive' (or 'see'). Armstrong, however, is not simply a direct realist, since he also believes in the materialist theory of the mind. Neither the Nyāya nor the Prābhākara can be called materialist or monist in the same sense. At least the situation is not very clear here. Moreover, Armstrong's direct realism maintains that all our five sense-faculties *perceive* the external material thing directly, and not through any sense-datum. Nyāya, however, says that only two sense-faculties, the sense of vision and the sense of touch, grasp the external material object directly, not through its properties! This will be explained further in the remaining chapters.

PART III

PERCEPTION AND THE WORLD

7
What Do We See?

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream.
H. W. LONGFELLOW

7.1 Phenomenalism. Representationalism, and Direct Realism

THE problems of perception are generally discussed in the Western context with reference to three main theories. These theories are about what we can directly know, and how we know it. They are: naïve or direct realism, representationalism, and phenomenalism. All these three philosophical views can be seen as three very different answers to the innocent-looking question 'What do we perceive *directly?*' The adverb 'directly' needs to be explained in this connection, for it makes all the difference between one answer and another. If the question is posed without this modifier, the answers of most philosophers may be non-distinct and deceptively simple. For they can say, in apparent agreement, 'Yes, we *see* apples, chairs, and trees'. But the naïve realist would probably 'naïvely' mean exactly what he says ('I see an apple'), while both the representationalist and the phenomenalist would beg to differ on this point: no one sees the apple directly. The two would agree about the 'indirectness' of the *seeing* of an *apple.* But while the representationalist would mean something slightly different by the word 'see' (in 'I see an apple') the phenomenalist would mean something very different by the phrase 'an apple'. The former would interpret 'seeing' in this context as an indirect way of acquiring knowledge based upon a causal inference from what we immediately or directly *see.* The latter would interpret the expression 'an apple' as denoting not a solid and stable physical existent (as we ordinarily assume an apple to be), but as standing for a construction out of what we directly see or perceive through various senses. All these three views are in some sense committed to the existence of the external world, or at least that is how they are understood in modern philosophical discussion. They commonly oppose the old sceptics,

agnostics, and idealists. The representationalist seems to yield some ground to the sceptics, while the phenomenalist concedes more than either of the other two. As a result, the phenomenalist has to go a long way in explaining that his position does not necessarily entail scepticism or idealism.

All of us (children, women, and men), in our pre-philosophical, pre-critical stage, claim that we see an apple, not simply the colour of the apple; we see the moon itself, not simply the front part of the moon. We claim likewise to touch the flower, we do not simply touch the touch of the flower. The naïve realist argues that we see things and touch them directly, for our pre-philosophical thinking cannot be all wrong. The object of our non-veridical perceptual awareness, under this view, is the external thing, bodies etc., and not simply their sensible qualities, such as colour or shape. If this is a fair characterization of the position called naïve realism, then it is not very different from what I shall call Nyāya realism in the Indian context. This position was opposed by the Buddhists as well as by some other schools, as we will see later. The expression 'naïve' however is misleading, and it would be better to avoid it. I shall follow the practice of W. Sellars and D. W. Armstrong and characterize broadly the Nyāya position as a 'direct' realism.[1]

Most philosophers have been reluctant to accept direct realism. For it is generally believed that there are some obvious arguments or evidence (e.g. argument from illusion and variability of perception) that may refute this naïvete about perception. I shall discuss some of these obvious arguments. Modern philosophical reservations about this naïvete have been nicely voiced by Russell in a *prasaṅga*-type (reductio) argument: 'Naïve realism leads to physics, and physics, if true, shows that naïve realism is false. Therefore naïve realism if true, is false. Therefore it is false.[2]

This argument seems to be Nāgārjunian or Buddhist in some sense. For a proto-Nāgārjuna argument runs like this:

> If the world we experience is substantial, it leads to desires, thirst and activities, but such desires, thirst, and activities, if followed, taking this world to be real, shows that the world we experience is hollow and unsubstantial. Therefore the world we experience, if substantial, is unsubstantial. Therefore it is unsubstantial, empty of its own nature.

[1] W. Sellars, p. 61. See also D. M. Armstrong (1961).
[2] B. Russell (1940), p. 15.

The above is not simply a parody of Russell's argument. It is important to note that the truth established by such *reductio* may not always be unassailable. If physics and science start with naïve realism, then naïve realism cannot simply be false. Naïve realism constitutes what may be called 'the sub-basement' of science. If the sub-basement collapses, the outer structure cannot remain intact.[3]

'What do we perceive *directly?*' is, to be sure, not a scientific question. For it is not a question that is generally answered by observation and experiment. It is a philosophical question. Its answer requires conceptual analysis and philosophical argument. Philosophers, however, cannot be oblivious of the experiments, data, and theories of science. These items should be taken into account by philosophers in order to make philosophical tenets compatible with science. Thus it is that both representationalism and phenomenalism try to get around the difficulty faced by direct realism, by holding that the *direct* or *immediate* object of awareness is a sense-impression, or a *sense-datum*, or a sensible quality. The ontological status of such an object has been a matter of controversy, but it is generally agreed that it cannot exist independently of our awareness of it. Some have even argued that sense-data can exist without being sensed i.e. 'unsensed sensibilia' could exist as unfulfilled possibilities. If this claim could be substantiated, then a lot of what the phenomenalist says could be sustained. For the representationalist, however, this is not of great importance. For even if the sensibilia are mental, they can serve as the ground for the 'causal' inference or knowledge of the physical object. However, this doctrine of the knowability of physical objects through inference alone easily becomes suspect, and hence the phenomenalist is quick to give up such a claim and argue for the constructibility of the physical world out of sense-data. We may say that representationalism thus shades off into phenomenalism, while both cling to the original intuition of naïve realism: there exists the physical world independently of our awareness of it. Even the phenomenalist must concede the existence of the physical world in some way. Thus Mill regards physical objects as 'permanent possibilities of our sensations'.[4]

The hallmark of realism (in the sense that concerns us here) is the

[3] See W. V. Quine (1960), p. 3. In response to such arguments we can probably say with Quine (1976): 'Surely now we have been caught up in a wrong line of reasoning. Not only is the conclusion bizarre; it vitiates the very considerations that lead to it' (p. 251).

[4] For J. S. Mill (1884), ch. XI, p. 246. See also A. J. Ayer (1954), ch. 6; Ayer (1973) pp. 81 and 84.

thesis about the independent existence of the external, physical world. In opposition to this, the philosophical view that we might call idealism says that the so called external physical world is our own making, for it is the externalization of what happens within us. There may be an external world behind the appearance, but we have no way of knowing what it is like. Phenomenalism sometimes comes very close to such a view. But resistance to such a consequence is emphasized by the phenomenalist's attempt to clarify in various ways the ontological status of the sense-data. I shall discuss the Nyāya–Buddhist controversy over the theories of perception, which move around the philosophical issues raised above. In fact, these are the relevant issues which any philosophical theory of perception has to face and resolve. Our first concern will be the sensation or sensory experience in perception.

The Sanskrit word *pratyakṣa,* which I am indiscriminately translating here as perception, is etymologically connected with *akṣa* = sensory faculty or sense-organ. Hence etymologically *pratyakṣa* should be translated as sensation or sensory experience. But etymology is not always the best guide in determining the actual meaning and use of a term in ordinary language. It is more risky in philosophers' language. The usual Sanskrit dictum is: Convention is stronger than etymology. The matter is slightly complicated by the inclusion of what we call *mind,* in the list of *akṣas.* Apart from the five 'external' sensory faculties, mind is added as the 'internal' faculty. It is not exactly the 'sixth sense' (in the sense that somebody is said to have intuitive knowledge on the basis of his or her 'sixth sense'), it is the sixth *akṣa* or *indriya,* as Vaibhāṣika Buddhists would claim. In fact, the meaning of *pratyakṣa* is never completely exhausted by our talk of the five types of sensory awareness, for a considerable number of 'inner' episodes of awareness must be called *pratyakṣa*, perception, because of their directness, irresistibility, and certainty. Hence an 'inner' *akṣa* 'faculty' has to be invented, as it were, to account for the arising of all 'inner' episodes and 'inner' perceptions, as the Ābhidhārmika[5] Buddhists would like to put it. What the senses are for the sensible world, the so-called mind is for the 'inner' world. In the early *Nyāyasūtra* list of (sense-) faculties or *akṣas,* the mind was conveniently dropped.[6] This

[5] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa* I. 17: The awareness that has immediately preceded any of the six (present) types of awareness is called 'mind'. We talk of eighteen base-elements (of which *mind* is one), but the 'mind' is counted as one in order to provide a (metaphorical) location of the mental awareness.

[6] *Nyāyasūtra,* 1.1.12. See Akṣapāda Gotama.

became the occasion for an elaborate criticism by Diṅnāga of the *Nyāyasūtra* definition of *pratyakṣa.* The sum and substance of this criticism is that if the mind is not regarded as an *akṣa* or 'faculty of cognition', then the definition is too narrow, for it excludes a very large class of 'inner' episodes which are generally called *pratyakṣa.*[7] Considering all this, I shall translate *'pratyakṣa'* as 'perception' as long as the English expression does not involve any misleading ambiguity. When ambiguities are to be avoided, I would however resort to various other means.

The etymology of *pratyakṣa* in Sanskrit underlines, therefore, the major issue: the sensory core in our perceptual awareness. The three philosophical theories of perception also branch off from this central issue. Representationalism and phenomenalism part company with naïve realism when it is shown that the sensory core is subjective i.e. dependent upon the perceiver, that it could be variable while the supposed physical stimulant remains invariant (the same water feeling hot and cold, the same honey tasting sweet and bitter, to different persons), and that the senses often deceive us to generate perceptual illusion. The Buddhist likewise relishes a victory over Nyāya when it is shown that beyond what is sense-given, it is impossible to know and say anything about the external world that we believe to be there. I shall now try to concentrate on this sensory core in perception and this will take us briefly into the description of the Nyāya and Abhidharma ontological systems. In fact the sensory core in perception is the meeting-point of various disciplines such as physics, physiology, psychology, epistemology, and philosophy. As a result, controversies abound, and philosophical issues are sometimes lost in such controversies. I do not wish to simplify a complex matter such as this. However I shall try only to see what the traditional Indian philosophers had to say on the matter.

A significant point emerges from the above account of the mind and 'mental' perception. Both the Buddhist and Nyāya agree that a case of 'mental' perception need not be treated very differently from the events of ordinary external perception. They both are perception but the object perceived may be either outside or inside. This seems to be of a piece with the general trend in the Indian philosophy of mind (Chapter 12.4).

[7] For Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Sanskrit rendering), see Jambuvijaya pp. 209–12; Ch. I. 19.

7.2 *The* Nyāysaūtra *Definition of Perception*

In the expression 'I see the tree directly', I have said that there may be some disagreement about the exact meaning of 'see' as well as of 'the tree'. Both the representationalist and the phenomenalist have something to say about this dispute. But there may also be disagreement about the exact meaning of 'directly' as well as the remaining component 'I'. For the present let us assume that 'directly' means 'immediately' which has obviously a temporal significance. Some philosophers may find it worth while to suggest that 'directly' could imply 'logical simplicity' or 'independence'.[8] Consider the three cases:

(1) I see from a distance something that looks like a man standing erect or an old tree-trunk, I do not know which. I have a perceptual doubt.
(2) I see a snake (i.e. misperceive it, for there is only a rope before me). Or, I see a white conch-shell as yellow.
(3) I see something but I do not know what, for I have never seen such a thing, nor heard it described.

All these three cases need to be considered in connection with what we call a veridical perception, a *pramā. Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4, therefore, adds three adjectives, *vyavasāyātmaka* 'having the nature of certainty' or 'decision', *a-vyabhicārin* 'non-deviating' or 'non-promiscuous', and *a-vyapadeśya,* 'non-verbal'. The idea is that perceptual doubt lacks certainty, while illusion lacks non-promiscuity; and hence, the first two cases are not instances of veridical perception. Whether the third case qualifies as veridical perception or not cannot easily be decided. It raises a number of important philosophic issues which engaged the attention of the Nyāya and Buddhist philosophers for almost a millennium, and not all of the issues are dead even today. I shall treat this question separately later (Chapter 10). Let us concentrate upon the first two claims: viz, veridical perception should be non-dubious and non-promiscuous.

The sceptics would wish to strike here. For the question is pertinent: how do we distinguish between the veridical perception from the non-veridical ones? In sensory doubt, we are uncertain whether to interpret the sensory experience as that of *A* or *B* (i.e. non-*A*) and we are *a priori* sure that it cannot be both. In sensory illusion,

[8] F. Jackson, pp. 19–22.

we are sometimes sure, but the illusoriness is exposed only with reference to another (presumably veridical) awareness which tells a different story. Here too we are sure *a priori* that both of them cannot be true together. But sceptics like Vasubandhu would argue: could they not both be false together? This move does not do any harm to the so-called law of non-contradiction, but only stalls the application of the law of the excluded middle, which is not a universal law when we are talking across several categorial structures. As long as we are talking in terms of external objects as objects of our vision, we have to decide between *A* and *B*. If the sensory core of our experience here is not external, if it is only within us, a subjective sense-impression, then both *A* and *B* (or non-*A*) would be a wrong description of it (assuming *A* or non-*A* to belong to the category of external objects). Similarly we must decide between two contradictory cases of awareness as long as the objective reference in either case is the same (say, the same external object). If this sameness of the objective reference is denied, then the contradiction vanishes. Suppose I see a snake, and in the next moment, with other conditions remaining unchanged, I see a piece of rope. Now I can argue that my vision of snake does not contradict my vision of rope, for both are given in my sensory experience, and have no status outside it. Both are in fact part of my vision, two cases of vision, to be sure, and hence there is no contradiction. If, however, both cases contain a claim to some objective reference, a reference to some object in the outside world, we would have a contradiction. For an external object such as a snake cannot be transformed into a rope in the next moment.

7.3 *Vasubandhu's Illusionism*

If the above argument has any cogency, then we would have to say that what we are aware of in our sensory experience does not really exist in the external world, and in this way it can be said to be 'non-existent' (*asat*) as an external object. (See Chapter 6.2.) How can we be aware of an external object if in fact there is no external object? Vasubandhu answers by quoting examples of dreams, delusions, hallucinations etc., where we are naturally aware of objects that are non-existent outside and presumably created by imaginative awareness. If it is possible for awareness to create its own object, and then to grasp it (as in a dream), then everything that we seem to be aware of could be on the same footing, a 'making of awareness' (a *vijñapti*) only. Our knowledge of the

external world is thus argued to be of a piece with the universal delusion (*avidyā*).[9]

Vasubandhu formulated three tentative objections against this thesis of *idealism* or universal delusion, only to refute them in the next verse. First, assuming the causal theory of perception and anticipating representationalism, it can be said that external objects exist and are causally responsible for the sense-perception that we generally have. The object in awareness is, therefore, causally determined by the external object. This explains how a particular awareness arises at a given place and time, and not just any awareness, because it is determined indirectly by the external object. If such causal determination did not exist, then it could not be explained why a particular perception would arise at a particular place and time, and not just any other perception (of any other object). Second, since awareness is a private and 'inner' affair for each of us, if the object of awareness be only a part of that 'inner' affair, how could we explain that the same object in perception is shared by many? Why, for example, do a number of people see the same tomato to be red? Again, the explanation from the representationalist point of view is that the external object causally determines what appears as the object or the sensory core in perception, and therefore, if the same external object determines it, we will have a similar sensory core as a result of which we can all see the tomato to be red. Third, the non-existent cannot function or cause anything in the way an external (real) object can. We cannot ride an externally non-existent (inner) horse; nor can we satisfy hunger with a dream-apple. How, therefore, can the external world function as it does? I see a plump, juicy tomato, and eat it with great satisfaction. If the object of seeing is reduced to a sensory core, a bulgy red shape, given or created in my perceptual awareness, with no outside connection whatsoever, what is it that I eat? Is the red shape edible at all?

Vasubandhu's answers to these objections are amazingly simple. The first and third objections are answered by referring, again, to the dream example (*svapnavat*). The answer, in fact, does not explain why such things happen but simply points to an analogical happening in a dream, where too the explanation is not forthcoming. We dream of a particular thing at a given place and time, and of another thing at another place and time without there being any (ostensibly) external

[9] Vasubandhu, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, Vimśatikārikā, verses 1–6.

factor or factors to determine the objects of our dream. The explanation, in other words, is equally inscrutable, but the point is made that it can happen. It is also argued that even a dream-object can be libidinally cathected. A dream-woman can satisfy the sexual urge in a dream and cause ejaculation.[10]

To answer the second objection, Vasubandhu uses a more ingenious method. He refers to the illusory experience or hallucination of a hell. In the Buddhist texts like *Mahāvastu* (from which Vasubandhu obviously derived his example), the hell is described as a cluster of some extremely painful experiences (such as that of being chopped into pieces or swimming in a lake of filth) which is supposedly shared at the same time by a number of persons having a common personal history (and hence a common *karmic* burden). In reality, however, the hell is inside the person, not outside. When the *karma* burden of several individuals coincides, they undergo the experience of hell, through a common psychosis described above. The age of Buddhist mythology is gone, but Vasubandhu's argument does not lose its force, for it is not very different from Descartes' celebrated argument with the conception of an all-powerful evil demon, even though Descartes' philosophic motivation was entirely different from that of Vasubandhu. In the modern world of technology, it is not impossible to create conditions for some common delusion which can deceive a number of persons. How do we know that some mad scientist is not, behind our back, stimulating our brains with various electrodes and employing the process so ingeniously that all of us here are having the common experience of enjoying a sumptuous dinner, where there is no food present, nor any dinner table? The answer is that we do not know. In this way Vasubandhu's answer would still seem adequate.[11] The publicness of the object of our perceptual experience is no guarantee for its being even causally connected with something external, as the representationalist would like to have it. The only salvageable position against this overwhelming illusionism is probably some form of phenomenalism, as we shall see later.

The above arguments illustrate the potential danger. We cannot avoid such scepticism if we try to concentrate too much upon the *so-called* sensory core of our perceptual experience. For such a sensory core is presumably common to both cases of veridical and illusory

[10] This last example is from Vasubandhu. See also B. K. Matilal (1974) for an elaborate discussion.

[11] For a modern version of such sceptical possibilities, see H. Putnam, pp. 1–48.

perception. The ontological status of the *immediate* object of such a perceptual process (and this may include even hallucinations and dreams) cannot be satisfactorily explained. The epistemologists in the Cartesian tradition generally distinguish between the immediate perception (sensing) from what common sense takes to be perception, i.e. mediate perception of public external objects, and hold that the former gives them the indubitable core, the rock-bottom basis, which contains nothing that is not indubitable in the experience itself. Their philosophical motivation is of course the search for certainty against the pervasive scepticism about the possibility of knowledge. Unlike Descartes himself, modern sense-data philosophers (heirs of the old representative theory and phenomenalism) think that they can reach the required 'rock-bottom' certainty in what they call the sense-data. For better or worse, sense-data theorists generally make use of what is dubbed as 'the argument from illusion', to show that direct realism is impossible, and that there must be sense-impressions or sense-data which are immediately grasped by our sensory awareness. In simplest terms, the argument states:

(1) Cases of sensory illusion are facts.
(2) What we are immediately aware of in such illusion is the 'sensory core' whose indubitability is guaranteed by the experience itself.
(3) In this respect immediate veridical perception is indistinguishable from immediate sensory illusion.
(4) Therefore the sense-data, the objects of any immediate perception, exist whatever their ontological status may be.

Western philosophers generally think that if the above argument holds, then there are two possible positions we may take up regarding the nature of physical objects. One is *regressive:* the physical object is there in the first place to give rise to the sense-datum, and thus we have a causal theory or representationalism. The other is *progressive:* the physical object is a construction out of these immediately given data, and thus we have phenomenalism, which says that we build up our world with these bits and pieces of what is given in immediate sensory experience. Moreover, we know that there is also a third position that is possible: physical objects do not exist, and it is a myth to assume that they do. This is the position of Vasubandhu in his *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi,* as I have outlined above. The third position may or may not be implied in the second, although the critics of the second

assert, more often than not, that it leads to the third position. The fourth position is, of course, direct realism which I shall try to defend.

7.4 The External World Does not Exist

We can note briefly the following steps which lead to the third position. In order to achieve this goal, we have to see that not only the immediate veridical perception is indistinguishable from immediate sensory illusion, but also the perceptual experience is indistinguishable, as far as our experience could guarantee, from what is *felt* as perceptual experience, e.g. hallucinations and dreams. For it is only another experience (another inner episode of awareness) that tells us that something was a dream or hallucination, and when the nature of all awareness is in question, such a counter-argument loses its force. I shall now follow Śabara to recount briefly the steps of the idealist argument, and then see how he tried to refute it.[12]

(1) It is a fact that our sensory awareness of an object may arise (as in dreams, illusions, and hallucinations) where such an object does not exist externally. (We may be aware of an elephant, in a dream, but it does not exist there externally, that is, is not there in our bedroom.)
(2) The object as we know it therefore does not give any causal support (*ālambana*) to the awareness that arises.
(3) This characteristic of grasping or revealing an object that is non-existent, is a necessary character (*svabhāva*) of such an awareness.
(4) This is a necessary or invariable character of all cases of awareness, including veridical perception.
(5) Perception of external objects cannot guarantee the existence of such objects.
(6) Such objects do not exist.

There are however many obvious and formidable objections to this type of argument and the position that it leads to. Śabara, for example, refuted it in the next sentence saying that it is utterly counter-intuitive. He said that since our waking awareness and dream are irresistibly characterized by the unmistakable mark of certainty and the lack of it respectively, it is wrong to blur the distinction between the two (*pratyaye jāgrato buddhiḥ suparinīścitā*). To call something counter-intuitive is, however, not a proper argument against it. In any case the

[12] Śabara, pp. 9–8.

illusionist's argument may be fundamentally flawed. But does Śabara's answer contain any proper counter-argument? Kumārila, in his exegesis on Śabara, uses his technical skill in debate and points out that Śabara in his answer reduces the illusionist's argument into some well-known type of sophistry (*jāti*) based upon sophistical analogy. As many as twenty-two types of sophistry (as already noted) are enumerated in the *Nyāyasūtra* list (Chapter 3.3). Kumārila says that according to Śabara the above argument can alternatively be identified either as a *vikalpa-samā* or a *vaidharmya-samā* variety of sophistry.

Let me explain. A sophistry shares the following general form of an argument: *A* has *B* because of *C* (and *B* and *C* are supposed to be invariably connected). To expose sophistry, therefore, one may point out that although *C* is connected with all cases of *B*, it is also connected with all cases of *D*, which are cases of not-*B*. Therefore only some cases of *C* are cases of *B*, while others are cases of not-*B*, i.e. *D*. This is how a *vikalpasamā jāti* is exposed. In the present example, Śabara claims that irresistible certainty characterizes veridical perceptual awareness in the waking stage, and this irresistible certainty is connected invariably with the characteristic of having a causal support (*ālambana*) from the external object. Therefore some cases of (perceptual) awareness may lack the causal support from outside, but not all. We have here *A* standing for 'a case of awareness', *B* for 'support-lessness', and *C* for 'awareness-hood'. By avoiding the rather clumsy abstractions we may say: 'Any awareness is support-less, for it is an awareness (has awareness-hood)'. The claim is that if anything is an awareness, then it is also support-less by the same token. To counter it, it is shown that some awareness (some of our waking awareness) cannot be support-less, e.g. my present awareness of the pot there, for it is characterized by irresistible certainty.[13]

The second way of exposing a sophistry is this. We cite another characteristic *D*, besides *C*, which is definitely present in some cases of *A*, and show that *D*, if present, would refute its being a case of *B*. Therefore, we say that irresistible certainty, if present in any sensory perceptual awareness, would prove that it receives causal support from the external object, and would thereby refute the position that it has no causal support from outside. Kumārila, however, after explaining Sabara in this way, thinks that the best way to take Śabara is to say that the irresistible certainty (*supariniścitatva*) characterizes the veridical

[13] See Kumārila, (*Nirālambanavāda*), verses 28–30. For *vaidharmyasamā*, see *Nyāyasūtra*, 5.1.2; and *vikalpasamā*, *Nyāyasūtra* 5.1.4.

external perception, which establishes beyond doubt the external object, and this contradicts directly the conclusion of the previous argument: The external object does not exist.

I shall leave this age-old dispute here. For obviously, Vasubandhu's argument can be reformulated in a more powerful and persuasive way, and it deserves to be taken more seriously. We may refer to a modern formulation of the sceptical possibilities, the one advanced by Hilary Putnam, as that of my being a brain in a vat with scientists and psychologists stimulating my brain. Putnam has argued that if we formulate a proper theory of reference, then such a possibility can be shown to be incoherent. If Putnam's argument succeeds, then by the same token, Vasubandhu's argument to show the possibility of our being in the midst of a super-dream before waking up with the ultimate wisdom (*prajñā*) could be likewise shown to be incoherent.

It is, however, difficult to see how Putnam's argument succeeds completely. It is a sort of transcendental argument to undercut the sceptical possibility. In Putnam's words: 'In short, if we are brains in a vat, then "We are brains in a vat" is false. So it is (necessarily) false.'[14] In other words, if we can consider whether the possibility that we are all brains in a vat obtains or does not obtain, we will see that it cannot obtain. If this correctly represents one of the general points of Putnam's argument, then I think Nāgārjuna had given a tentative answer: it may be that all propositions are false (empty), but certainly we cannot assert, in the circumstances, that all propositions are false for such an assertion would be pointless and also false without in the least affecting the fact that all propositions are false. (See Chapter 2.2 and 2.3.) Even if our statement 'We are brains in a vat' is false (for we may not really *know* what we are talking about), it would not affect the fact that we are brains in a vat!

If this seems hasty, let us dwell upon the point Putnam makes about reference. He denounces what he calls the magical theory of reference, according to which words and mental pictures *intrinsically* represent what they are about. But even in a non-magical theory of reference, we can simply say that terms have something to refer to, not that we are in any sort of direct contact with the referents. For although there is no connection between the *word* 'trees' as used by the brains in a vat and actual trees (if there are such things), the brains could use the word 'tree' and what the word represents would be either *parasitic* upon such

[14] H. Putnam p. 15. Putnam's major argument is given in chs. 1 and 2.

a word used by the mad psychologists, the transcendent manipulators, or it would represent no *definite* object.

To take the last point first. A word or a form may well have an indefinite, very general sort of referent. Let us suppose along with Putnam that there is a planet somewhere which is exactly like ours, but no human being there has ever seen a tree. Suppose one day a picture of some tree is accidentlly dropped on their planet by a spaceship. Putnam argues that those humans in that planet looking at the picture would have mental images which could be qualitatively identical with our image of a tree but they would not be images which represented a tree any more than anything else. But this is precisely the point. As long as the picture is taken to be a picture of 'some strange object, nature and function unknown', the demand of the theory of reference would be fulfilled. For the picture would thereby consistently form part of the collection of all pictures in that planet. We may note also that the word 'tree' would be, in similar circumstances (when 'tree' being a noun would represent an indefinite object, and this would presumably be rendered more specific by the context of utterance), part of the vat-English.

References of the terms in vat-English (spoken by brains in a vat) may be parasitical upon the terms used by the manipulators, who are not brains in a vat. Therefore, as long as we concede that there could be such 'transcendental' manipulators, who are *not* floating in a vat as we presumably do, we cannot exclude the possibility that we may very well be brains in a vat, and still use terms whose reference would be parasitical upon those used by the manipulators. The problems with the sceptic's description of all of us having a super-dream, or being brains in a vat, is not that such possibilities are in themselves incoherent, but that because they are coherent, we *do not know* whether or not such possibilities obtain.

Nyāya has often claimed against the sceptic that his formulation of the sceptical arguments and possibilities is parasitical upon his conception of the actual, external world. We may call this the 'metaphors-presuppose-non-metaphorical-uses' (*vat-karaṇaṃ katham*) argument. This says in effect that the sceptic is 'taking sidelong glances' at the real world in order to formulate his objection against this very world. He collects all his materials from the non-illusory world, and thereby constructs his illusory world, in order to show that the non-illusory is so similar in essential respects to the illusory one, that it may very well be an illusory one too. But in describing the

hypothetical situation, he uses words which are given only 'metaphorical' meanings in the context. However, such 'metaphorical' meanings are unintelligible unless the *primary* meanings (*mukhyārtha*) are understood. In other words the language describing the sceptical possibility would be intelligible only in the context of a world in the description of which the words used in the former language would have their primary, i.e. non-metaphorical meanings. If this argument holds, it supports Putnam's argument against the sceptical possibility. In fact I think Nyāya and Putnam can join hands in their efforts to refute scepticism as incoherent. However, I have already expressed my misgivings about the success of this line of attack against scepticism. The sceptic may still claim that the 'brains in a vat' is only a *'metaphorical'* description of what he envisages as a possibility. It is obviously true that the non-metaphorical description by us of an actual situation such as this one would be impossible as long as we are *victims* of the situation itself. But that does not show that some such sceptical possibility is incoherent. For there may be such transcendental manipulators and the terms we use in describing the sceptical possibility could be parasitical upon their non-metaphorical uses in the manipulators' language.

I think the best way to answer such scepticism about knowledge is not to claim that it is incoherent, but to argue that its coherence is not a sufficient condition for its being actual. In fact, it is possible to set one group of sceptics against the other. Theologians and philosophers have often argued against the sceptics who deny the existence of a benevolent creator god that theism can be shown to be coherent. In other words, in spite of the problems presented by the predominance of evil and paradoxes of omniscience and omnipotence, arguments are given to show that the concept of an almighty god is coherent (cf. R. Swinburne).[15] Atheistic sceptics usually counter: yes, there may be such a possibility, but this does not show that actually such a god exists. In the same vein we may counter the above scepticism about the possibility of knowledge: yes, it is possible that such mad scientists, transcendental manipulators, exist. But how do we know that they *do* exist or some such sceptical possibility does *actually* obtain? No *positive* evidence can be given to show that such a possibility actually obtains, except that some such possibility is consistent with all that we know or profess to know. If this point seems cogent, and the existence

[15] See, for example, R. Swinburne (1977).

of mad transcendental manipulators (including a god) remains only a bare possibility, then we can say with Nyāya that the backbone of scepticism has been broken. We have to live with only some idle doubts about a very unsavoury but remote possibility.

7.5 *The External World Exists*

For a persuasive counter-argument to meet scepticism about the external world, one may invoke the Johnsonian way. Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, is reported to have kicked at a stone in order to show that it existed. G. E. Moore in a similar fashion, raised his two hands and said, 'Here is one human hand, and here is another. Therefore two human hands exist. And therefore, two physical objects exist.' W. V. Quine has commented: 'to begin with, at least, we have little better to go on than Johnsonian usage. The familiar material objects may not be all that is real, but they are admirable examples.'[16]

The general and pervasive belief about perception, at least about perception proper, is that perception of something implies that something exists. Śabara says: 'If there is a perceptual awareness of *X*, then it does not "deviate" from *X*. What "deviates" from *X* is not a perceptual awareness of *X* (in the proper sense of the term.)'[17]

In these words, Śabara states the principle of perception which becomes central in the discussion of the epistemological role of our perceptual awareness. We can rephrase the principle in either of the two ways:

(1) If a perceptual awareness of *X* arises, then *X* exists or is present.
(2) If S *sees* X, then X exists.[18]

This principle apparently runs counter to many experiential facts, some of which we have discussed in the previous chapter, viz. sensory illusions, hallucination, and dreams. It is clearly possible that our experience in a non-veridical perception is indistinguishable from that in a veridical one. Faced with this conflict between the above principle and the presence of illusory experience, philosophers have made

[16] W. V. Quine (1960), p. 3.

[17] Śabara, pp. 7–8 *'yat pratyakṣam na tad vyabhicarati yad vyabhicarati na tad pratyakṣam.'*

[18] If following the Buddhist we do not wish to refer to the person, the owner of the awareness, we may prefer (1). Many Western philosophers make the same point about the use of the English verb 'see' (A. J. Ayer, 1940, ch. I). Śabara probably supplies the Indian counterpart of the same point. The linguistic insight involved in both traditions does not seem, in this case, to be very different.

various attempts to get around the difficulty. The easy and trivial answer would be that there is no conflict, for cases of non-veridical perception should not be called 'perception' in the proper sense of the term. This is of little help unless it is accompanied by an analytical account of non-veridical perception as well as of what we 'perceive' in such cases. Indian philosophers have propounded different theories of misperception or illusion which have already been investigated in a previous chapter. It is also easy to see how a recognition of the above principle has forced many epistemologists in the Cartesian tradition to recognize as existents some entities such as sense-data although it has never been settled whether they are material or mental.

It is still believed in some quarters that what modern science tells about the causal mechanism of perception would support only a sort of phenomenalism. In what follows I shall introduce the classical Nyāya argument against (Buddhist) phenomenalism by discussing first a pre-Diṅnāga Buddhist definition of perception, ascribed to Vasubandhu, the author of *Vādavidhi*.[19]

The above principle of perception can be easily upheld, it may be argued, if we shift from what is called mediate or indirect, or interpretative perception to what may be called the most direct and immediate perception. In other words, if we restrict the use of the term 'perception' to the latter class, then we can say that if a person sees most directly whatever he sees, then whatever he sees exists or is present. This was presumably the Buddhist move. If we can posit the existence of what, in the absence of a better term, should be called the percepts, or sense-data or sensa, then, Vasubandhu thought, we can say further that they are also causally responsible for the arising of respective perceptions – perceptions which grasp such objects. Perception is therefore defined by Vasubandhu as the awareness that arises from the very object by which that awareness is also designated. In other words, if an awareness is called 'the awareness of *X*' and it also arises from *X*, then it is a (veridical) perception of *X*. A clearly non-veridical perception is certainly different from this. For when I misperceive a rope as a snake, my awareness can be designated as an awareness of the snake but obviously the snake is neither present nor does it 'cause' the awareness to arise from it. This is not all. The definition, in fact, rejects what is normally called perception, viz. all so-called mediate or indirect perception of bodies, tables, chairs, trees,

[19] Vasubandhu's *Vādavidhi* is lost, but the definition is quoted, elaborated and criticized by Uddyotakara (under 1.1.4) and Diṅnāga (see M. Hattori, pp. 32–5).

etc. In other words the Buddhist, like the phenomenalist, is not committed to the existence of such external bodies or things. My (perceptual) awareness of the tree is no doubt to be designated as my 'perception of the tree' but it does not *arise from* (i.e. is not 'caused' by) what we call a tree, for it arises from *much less* than 'the entire tree'. It is either the visible form or the colour or possibly the colour of the front part that is visible, that 'causes' the awareness to arise. This is variously noted by philosophers who oppose the naïve realists. For example, it is said that our actual seeing of the table is based upon our seeing 'much less' or very little, or it is said that our perception normally 'goes beyond' what we actually sense.[20] The same fact also becomes the basis for the distinction between direct/immediate and indirect/mediate perception. Direct perception is the perception of 'much less' or very little, while indirect perception is what goes beyond. To make the contrast more obvious, it is said that indirect perception uses accretions due to past experience, collateral information, anticipations, interpretive and inferential elements, habitual or conditional associations etc. Both the phenomenalist and the representationalist agree and say that there is such a distinction, and the Buddhist would be delighted to see that he has driven a stony wedge between the two types of perception. For in the next stage he would say that all cases of mediate or indirect, normal perception should *not* be called (veridical) perception, for what appears in such awareness does not (causally) give rise to the awareness itself.

I shall discuss in Chapter 8 the view according to which we should regard normal perception of the physical body as inference. Briefly, it is suggested that we see only the front part of an opaque-coloured physical body; from this we infer the body as a whole, and we may say that we are seeing the (whole) body. We may call this the 'we-do-not-see-the-other-side-of-the-moon' stance. However, before we can discuss this view we need to talk about the sensible properties or sense-impressions and their role in our direct sensory perception, as these were understood in the Buddhist Abhidharma.

7.6 *The Abhidharma Phenomenalism*

Granted that we see very little and much less than what we claim to see, a representationalist may still ask the Buddhist: why is it that things like chairs, tables and trees cannot be causally connected with

[20] The jargon 'much less' is from G. E. Moore; 'goes beyond' is due to A. J. Ayer.

our (presumably mediate) perception of them? An answer to this question takes us into the heart of the philosophic significance of the Buddhist world-view, i.e. the world-view that is outlined in the Abhidharma systems. The Abhidharma schools weave together alternately the doctrines of five *skandhas* or aggregates, twelve bases (*āyatanas*), and eighteen *dhātus* or base-elements. In the 'aggregate' or *skandha* doctrine, a person or his experience of the world is analysed and classified into five kinds of aggregates or groups: 'matter' or visible forms, feelings, perceptions, (mental) forces, and consciousness. In the *base* theory, the items are reclassified according to twelve bases: five sense-faculties and the inner faculty (mind) as well as their 'objects' which include the 'mind-objects' or the 'mindables' (called *dharmas*) as the twelfth item. In the *base-element* doctrine, six types of awareness (five sensory and the one internal) correspond to two sets of six, one set of six faculties, and the other set of their six 'objective' counterparts.

The *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasbandhu delineates the following list:[21]

The occurrent	*The locus of origin*	*The 'object' complement or support*
1. visual awareness	7. faculty of vision	13. the visibles (colour + shape)
2. auditory awareness	8. faculty of hearing	14. sound
3. olfactory awareness	9. faculty of olfaction	15. smell
4. gustatory awareness	10. faculty of tasting	16. taste
5. tactile awareness	11. faculty of touching	17. touch
6. 'mental' awareness	12. faculty of cognizing = mind	18. 'mindables' = *dharma*

There is an oft-quoted saying of the Buddha which asserts that depending upon the conjunction of one in column (2) (faculty of vision, for example) another one in column (3) (colours and shapes), the corresponding item in column (1), visual awareness, arises.[22] It is well known that in the Buddha's doctrine, there is no soul. For a soul or a person is a 'synthetic' concept, where some of the above items are put together or construed together as an aggregate.

What the Buddha said about the soul or the person was later extended to include any substance, any thing, body, material and physical object such as chairs, tables, and trees. All these are 'synthetic' concepts. There is hardly anything in the material world besides the five phenomenal properties, the five sensibilia. Therefore our immediate sensory awareness of 'the very little', the unique

[21] Vasubandhu, *Abhidarmakośa,* I. 17.

[22] The oft-quoted passage is: *'cakkuñ cāvuso paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu-viññānam'*, *Samyutta Nikāya,* II, 72 ff.

sensible phenomenon, the 'colour-expanse' for example, is a case of veridical perception, for it owes its origin to that phenomenon as its 'objective' complement. This dependence of the perceptual awareness upon its 'objective' complement constitutes the minimal 'causal' connection required by the Buddhist '*pratyaya*' theory. Even the colour-expanse is only a phenomenon, for that is not the 'ultimately-real' entity. The 'ultimately' reals (also called the 'substantially' reals) are the atomic constituents of these phenomena or sensibilia. Our familiar chair has, therefore, first to be resolved into (or 'dissolved' into) a set of familiar sensibilia, and then the gross sensibilia are in turn resolved into a cluster of atomic sensibilia. The modern sense-data philosopher along with the old representationalist, oscillates between the dualism of sense-data and physical objects, for this seems to be the outcome of his analysis of the sensory core of perception with a well-grounded belief in a mind-independent reality. He also shares the same (Cartesian) epistemological concern along with his phenomenalist friend, about getting to an indubitable, incorrigible, and irresistible ground for certainty.

The Buddhist however resolves the duality by a unique doctrine of two levels of existents, or two types of reality: the phenomenally real or the 'synthetic' existent, and the substantially real or the ultimate existents. The former is called the *saṃvṛti-sat,* the latter *dravya-sat.*[23] (See Chapter 7.7.) Awareness of the former lumps together the ultimately discreet, atomic elements, concealing (cf. *saṃvṛti*) their real nature and revealing them as one unity. The latter are revealed only in our analytic awareness, or in our *prajñā*, or informed insight, while they are also causally responsible for the perceptual awareness to arise. This Abhidharma Buddhist theory seems to share some characteristics of representationalism. The atomic constituents of the sensibilia are individually unobservable and by definition imperceptible; but collectively they create the sensible forms, or phenomena, that are *gross* and hence observable. They appear in our sensory awareness. This is how Diṅnāga understood what may be called the pre-Diṅnāga Buddhist view and accordingly he criticized it before he developed his own view about perception, as we shall see later (Chapter 10.3). Notice that the ultimately reals or the substantial elements, the atoms of such 'material' forms as colour, are in this theory much like the Lockian substance in so far as they are not observable or perceptible.

[23] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa, VI. 4.*

The above similarity with representationalism is, however, misleading. For the Buddhist does not say here that we indirectly or mediately become aware of the gross pot, or what he calls a blue-expanse. Rather, we become directly aware of the gross coloured shape or the blue expanse which we call a pot and, what is more, there is nothing further than this in the material side besides such *gross* sensibilia as are created out of atom clusters. This direct awareness of the blue is however suspect, because the gross blue is a fake object To be sure, the epistemological problem for representationalism is to see whether the scepticism about the existence and the ultimate nature of the external objects can be answered or refuted. The Buddhists, at least the Vaibhāṣikas, seem to have been sure that we know that external objects *exist* and that we know that they are ultimately atomic (hence imperceptible), and that the atoms come together to generate the *gross* expanse which we see. To understand the actual nature of these 'external' objects we have to give some details of the Abhidharma world-view.

7.7 Nominal Existence and Substantial Existence

In the Abhidharma world-view the most pervasive term used is *rūpa*, for it stands for everything that is external and non-mental objects. It stands for all the five senses and their five sensibilia, as well as for certain other things.[24] The entire material world is constituted of a group of *rūpa*. In the second use of 'rūpa' in the same context, it refers to the objects to be grasped by visual perception alone i.e. the coloured shapes. The dispute between Nyāya and the Buddhist in this context is not whether the non-mental entities exist or not but whether such gross material objects as chairs, pots, and tables exist or not. The Abhidharma here uses a distinction between what is *nominally* existent and what is *substantially* existent (*saṃvṛti-sat* and *dravya-sat*) in order to spell out his world-view without any apparent contradiction. Thus it is held that while chairs, pots, and tables are only nominally existent, the phenomenal property-particulars (*svalakṣaṇas*) or, if atomism is conceded the atomic data or the atom-stimulants of our sensory faculties, are substantially existent.

This theory of two kinds of existents, one ultimate and one non-ultimate, implies a philosophic attitude that is generally called reductionism. Or, if reductionsim is taken to be stronger thesis which

[24] Ibid. I. 9.

believes in the possibility of reduction in practice, a weaker thesis (such as the one Michael Dummett[25] has called a reductive thesis) is nevertheless implied by this position. In other words, there is a belief here that statements about chairs, tables, and pots cannot be true unless another set of statements using the *dharma* vocabulary is also true. In fact some sort of a reductive thesis may be part of any realistic ontology. For instance Nyāya realism (which will be called a sort of naïve realism) would believe in a reductive thesis about the class of statements containing *upādhis* or nominal universals. For, according to Nyāya, such statements would not be true, unless some other statements containing real particulars and real universals are true.

M. Dummett has proposed a reformulation of the traditional metaphysical dispute (realism and anti-realism) in terms of modern semantic doctrine. This is a complex issue and has generated a great deal of controversy. Not all the points of the controversy are relevant here and I shall largely bypass the issue. Some brief comments may however be relevant.

Dummett departs from the traditional way of thinking about metaphysical issues by setting aside the issue of *reduction* (where statements of one kind can be reduced to those of another kind, the latter being regarded as more fundamental and presumably irreducible), and by bringing to the forefront the issue of bi-valence, i.e. whether statements of one kind are determinately true or false. This way of looking at matters has bred its own problems as A. J. Ayer, P. F. Strawson, and others have pointed out. But perhaps the idea is that realism (in Dummett's own view) takes reality to be all 'fixed' and determinate and our own probings into it cannot make an iota of difference to it, while an opposite doctrine, anti-realism, would make its 'real' nature more or less dependent upon how we discover or 'prove' facts about it. This indeterminateness of reality seems to be the hallmark of anti-realism in Dummett's view. If this account of Dummett's very complex view is at least partially correct then one can say further that realism in this characterization claims to take a 'god's-eye view' of the universe while anti-realism *humanizes* it. Such a broad characterization of anti-realism would however include not only Buddhist (Abhidharma) phenomenalism and representationalism but also the 'emptiness' doctrine of the Mādhyamika school (where the theory-dependent and subjectively conditioned nature of all metaphysical views, *dṛṣṭi-s,* is acknowledged and emphasized).

[25] M. Dummett (1979), p. 3.

The Abhidharma uses a rule of thumb to mark off entities that would be regarded as nominally existent (or conceptually existent) from those that would be substantially existent. It may be noted that the Buddhist was not interested in explaining material-object statements in terms of phenomenalistic statements but only showing that the material substances are non-ultimates for they are not constant or unbreakable. Hence this is not reductionism in the strong sense. Our awareness of the table and our use of the expression 'the table' to refer to the object of such awareness are non-ultimate in the sense that if different parts of the table are pulled apart and broken to pieces, we do not have any such perceptual awareness any more, nor could we use the expression 'the table' to refer to those broken pieces. What we refer to by 'the table' therefore has only a conceptual or nominal existence for the Buddhist.

It may be noted that the Abhidharma is not opposed to the 'materiality' of what we refer to by the expression 'table'. The ambivalence of the Buddhist regarding the material object is due to its composite character or breakability or analysability. Divisibility or dissolubility is regarded by the Buddhist as a mark of the ephemeral nature of such objects as a table, a pot, or a tree. Therefore, to reach the ultimates, he reaches for the indivisible wholes or atoms. Let us ask: What may be the basis of such a criterion for reality?

Ordinarily, a synthetic compound in chemistry is regarded by common people to be somehow less real than simple non-compound radicals or natural elements out of which the compound is formulated. (A synthetic material is sometimes considered less *valuable* than the natural one). Nature presents us generally with compound objects. Non-compound simples, sometimes called the ultimates, are arrived at through analysis. Such non-compound simples enjoy the privilege of being regarded as more real than the objects they produce in combination. But why this should be the case may be an interesting question.

Our sense of reality seems to be mostly associated with the notion of indestructibility. A phantasm vanishes, but the real man does not. The paradox of existence and change asks, 'If something exists, how can it change or be otherwise?' Implied in such questions is the general feeling that what changes, what turns into something else or is destroyed, is less real, less substantial, than what is not subject to such transformations. The conclusion is thus drawn that the chair which I am sitting upon is not as real as the elements out of which it is made.

For otherwise, how can I, if I wish, pull it apart and destroy it, while the elements still continue to exist? Reality or real existence carries along with it the notion of permanence or unmanipulability almost as its integral part!

Being implicitly guided by such considerations, one may come to see why the Buddhist posits a distinction of the kind mentioned above. A composite entity is only seemingly real, and the element arrived at by analysis is ultimately real. The *Abhidharmakośa* VI, 4 defines the issue as follows:

That thing is nominally existent, e.g. a pot, which being broken to parts does not give rise to our awareness of it (any more). Further, that, in regard to which our awareness cannot arise if we exclude the (phenomenal) properties from it, is also nominally existent, e.g. water.

We cannot apply the term 'a pot' to the broken parts of a pot, and therefore, the pot has only a nominal existence or 'conceptual' existence. Mass terms like 'water' however present a problem. For 'water' refers not only to a mass or a body of water, but it is also applied to its parts or even to parts of its parts. But still water-body is not a substantially existent entity for the Buddhist. To avoid the problem, the second criterion for the nominally existents is formulated in the verse quoted above. 'Water' applies to a mass of water which comprises sensible qualities such as colour, touch, and fluidity. Water is referred to only as the substratum of these properties. We cannot have any awareness (perceptual) of the water-body, if we strip it of all the sensible and other properties. The Buddhist argues that a propertyless substratum cannot exist and hence, the supposed substrata such as water cannot have substantial existence. They are only nominally existent. One may argue by the same token that the unpropertied substance cannot exist substantially for an unpropertied substance is never experienced as such and hence terms referring to such substances refer only to the nominally existent entities. Substantial or ultimate existence, therefore, belongs only to the atoms of the elementary sensible qualities such as coloured shapes, smell, taste, sound, and touch.

I quote in full Vasubandhu's explanation of the above verse in support of the interpretation given here:

If something is divided into parts and as a result our awareness of it does not arise, then it is nominally existent. For example, a pot. When a pot is broken into pot-halves (*kapālaśaḥ*), an awareness of pot does not arise. And if our

cognition of a thing does not arise when other properties are cognitively (*buddhyā*) separated from it, then that thing is also to be known as nominally existent. For example, water. In this case an awareness of water does not arise when we mentally exclude from it properties such as the *rūpa* (the visible form, etc.). They are technically called *saṃvṛti*, 'phenomena', or the screen or cover consisting of the phenomena concealing the real.

When they say within the scope of the phenomenal that the pot exists and water exists, they speak the truth, and not the untruth. Hence these are called nominal truths. That which is different from them, is ultimately existent. Even when the ultimate is divided, our cognition of it still arises. Our cognitions of it arise even when other properties are, through cognitive analysis, excluded from it. That is the substantially real. For example, the *rūpa* (the visible coloured shape). With regard to the *rūpa*, even when it is divided into atoms, and even when other properties such as taste are excluded from it through cognitive analysis, an awareness regarding the own-being of the *rūpa* certainly arises. Similarly feelings etc. (the internal mind-objects) are to be understood (as substantially, i.e. ultimately existent).[26]

Yaśomitra's comment on this may also be helpful:

The pot etc. can be separated, i.e. dissolved by (human) effort. Water etc. can only be cognitively dissolved. Thus, there are two types of nominal entities (existents): the nominal existents that are located in the cluster of other phenomena (i.e. other nominally existents), and those that are located in the cluster of the ultimates, the substantially real ones. With regard to the first (the pot etc.) analysis is possible by breaking apart as well as by the cognitive exclusion of other properties. With regard to the second type, analysis is possible only by cognitive exclusion and not by breaking apart.[27]

All artefacts and material bodies are, under this theory, only nominally existent, for they are dissolvable into their constituents and if these constituents are further dissolvable, they would also be nominally existent by the same token. In this way, we would reach a group of fundamental materials, the designata of such mass terms as 'water', 'earth', and 'gold', which would not be dissolvable in the same way, for parts or atoms of water would also be called 'water'. But they are also nominally existent by the second criterion, for they are

[26] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, pp. 889–90.

[27] All this need not be dismissed as a pre-scientific theory which can have only historical interest if any. For even the post-scientific theories today have not fared much better. Writing in 1973, A. J. Ayer showed even a 'slight preference' for a theory that conceives of 'physical particles as being what Locke called the minute parts of perceptible objects'. Moreover, these minute parts, Ayer contends, are imperceptible simply because it is an empirical consequence of their being so minute. The Abhidharma atoms were not very far behind! A. J. Ayer (1973), pp. 110–11.

cognitively or conceptually analysable into fundamental qualities or quality-atoms. When such qualities are taken away by analytic process, nothing substantial remains. These fundamental qualities are, according to the Abhidarma, nothing but what we may call the five sensibilia. The obvious implication is that these are the ultimate existents as far as the material world is concerned. Does it mean that the material world *reduces* to only (very broadly defined) five sensibilia? The answer is probably yes, but there are reservations. We may recall Vasubandhu's own comment: Within the scope of the phenomenal, the nominally existent is very much real. For it is said, 'When they say that the pot exists and water exists, they speak the truth, not untruth.'

What has been stated here would be acceptable to both the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas. But a subtle distinction between their positions must be understood. For the Vaibhāṣikas, although the cluster of atoms that we see as a patch of blue is nominally existent (as opposed to the atoms themselves), the patch has nevertheless an *objectivity* (since it is not mind-dependent). For the Sautrāntikas however, the nominally existent entity lacks this *objectivity*, it is deemed to be superimposed on the (external) atoms by the mind. The *blue-form* is in the awareness although it is caused by the blue-atoms in the external world.

The above distinction has important implications for the Sautrāntika–Vaibhāṣika theory of causality and perception, to which I now wish to turn. The problem with the nominally existent is that it cannot be causally effective (by definition) for the arising of perceptions. 'I see a chair' could be translated in this theory as 'My perceptual awareness has the form of a chair', but since that chair is only nominally existent, it did not cause my perception of it. It is the fundamental property, *rūpa* (or the property-atoms constituting the chair) that is causally responsible for the perception (although such atoms would be individually invisible). The nominally existent entity being thus devoid of causal efficacy would resemble the intentional object of our awareness, for the intentional objects are claimed to be devoid of causal efficacy much in the same way.

We have thus a partial resemblance with the 'causal theory' of perception. Although the atom-stimulants – the ultimate causes of perception – are too subtle to be perceived, we can construct only a causal inference about their existence. What lie beyond perception but are causally related to it are supportless, 'non-substantial' quality-atoms. It is neither a Lockian theory nor even a Berkeleian theory. For

it did not say, 'To be is to be perceived'. Rather it said, 'To be *substantial* (as opposed to *nominal*) is to be causally effective, i.e. to cause a perceptual awareness.'

What I have called Buddhist (realistic) phenomenalism (with tongue in cheek) has, however, various strands. The Sautrāntikas may be called 'representationalists' under some interpretation of representationalism (see Chapter 11.2). The Vaibhāṣika view is that the objects of (external) perception are non-mental phenomena which are somehow 'out there', the gross sensibilia. The sensibilia fall into the group designated by the term '*rūpa*', and it is not absolutely clear how this rather important term should be interpreted. Apparently the contrast is with the term '*citta*', which covers everything that can be put under the 'consciousness' segment of the reality – awareness, desire, feeling, dispositions, and so on. It seems to me that this group of sensibilia shares the same or a similar kind of ambiguity as the sense-datum had in the writings of the early 'sense-data' philosophers (see H. H. Price). The Buddhist sensibilia are non-mental (for the Vaibhāṣikas at least, perhaps not for the Sautrāntikas), but it would be difficult to call them physical. A phenomenalist might have to live with this ambiguity. For we might recall what Price has said about the sense-data of a phenomenalist: they are neither mental nor physical, they are not caused at all, and not even 'real' in the ordinary sense of the word. Price continues:

> According to him (the Phenomenalist) we must simply take the sense-given continuum as a going concern. There it is, and all statements in which material things and events are mentioned, are ultimately statements about it – about the manner in which it does or could develop itself, whether now or in the past or in the future.[28]

The Buddhist's *rūpa* is of course 'a going concern' but we must also underline the contrast or difference between the Buddhist's *rūpa* and the phenomenalist's sense-data (as described by Price in this context). The Pricean phenomenalist rejects the 'causal theory of perception', which says that sense-data are causally dependent upon the thing (that is, a tree or a table) as their 'source'. For if by 'thing' we mean the 'complete thing', then this *complete* thing is a combination of the family of sense-data and the physical occupant of the particular space, and thus it would involve the absurdity of saying that *A* (the sense-datum) is causally dependent upon *AB* (*the complete* thing – that is, the family of

[28] H. H. Price, pp. 317–18.

sense-data and the physical occupant). If by 'thing' we mean the physical occupant only, then Price says that the tree or other physical occupant may well be the *remote cause* of the sense-data composing the family. The same view, however, claims that the sense-data are causally dependent upon the organism of the sentient. The Buddhist sensibilia are in no sense caused by the 'thing' or what has been called by Price the physical occupant (the tree or the table). If, however, by 'physical occupant' we mean the gross, visible, coloured shape, to which the word 'tree' applies, then of course the Buddhist believes just the opposite. The gross *rūpa* or visible coloured shape is itself caused by the relevant atomic constituents. These atoms are also what are *substantially* existent and *causally* responsible for the perception to arise (in a very loose sense of causation, viz. dependence). The atoms are themselves individually imperceptible. To use a modern analogy, they are like the minutest dots, different combinations of which create the visible picture that we see on the television screen. In this sense, therefore, the *rūpa*-atoms cause the perceptual awareness, for they give rise to the gross expanse of the coloured shape. (See also Chapter 11.2.)

7.8 Colour and Shape: Molyneux's Question

The *Abhidharma-kośa* 1. 10, says that *rūpa* (in the second sense of being the object of vision only) can be of two kinds: colour and shape (*varṇa* and *saṃsthāna*). Some, however, contend that certain visible objects are only 'colours' (such as red, darkness, shade, and light) while certain others are only shapes (long, circular, high, and low), and the rest are both (cloud, dust, and smoke). This classification given by the Abhidharma is intriguing. It goes on to record another view which says that only light and darkness could be called exclusively 'colours' and all the rest are a mixture of both colour and shape (coloured shapes). For example, a red patch must have a shape (any shape) besides being red.

Vasubandhu tries to draw the following philosophic conclusion from the above-mentioned difference of opinion: the distinction between 'colour' and 'shape' is not ultimately tenable. For the *visible* is one, and not two; and we might only come to know it in two ways. His commentator Yaśomitra points out that the point raised by Vasubandhu indicates that the Sautrāntika differs from the Vaibhāṣika in this respect. Vasubandhu here, according to Yaśomitra, leans towards the Sautrāntika position, as he undoubtedly does on many occasions.

Vasubandhu holds here that the shape (form?) as opposed to 'colour' is not really a visible object, not at least separately visible to the eye. The pure shape that is thought to be grasped by the eye-organ is actually a construction of the mind (see, *mānasaṃ tv etat parikalpitam*). We see a coloured patch as a whole, of which the 'shape' or 'form' is an integral part. There is nothing that could be a shape and at the same time 'colourless' as well as visible.

The above point is important. For otherwise the Vaibhāṣika would have to say either that the same shape is the object of visual awareness as well as that of tactile awareness, or that there are two 'shapes', one to be included in the 'domain' (*āyatana*) of the visible and the other in the 'domain' of the tangible. The first alternative goes against the general Buddhist doctrine that each sense-faculty has its own unique domain of objects (*pramāṇa-vyavasthā*).[29] Under *Abhidharmakośa* IV. 3, Vasubandhu clearly says that the Sautrāntikas does not admit the 'shape' (*saṃsthāna*) to be a real entity, a *dravya-sat*, something substantially existent, for it appears only when some sort of 'colour' is there. It is at best a *prajñapti-sat*, a nominally existent entity. (See Chapter 7.7.) Otherwise, the shape has to be something that is grasped by two distinct sense-faculties, eye and the sense of touch. The shape is actually a configuration of colours in this theory, i.e. an abstraction from such configuration, and hence there cannot be a colourless configuration. It may possibly be argued that in darkness from a distance we do not see any colour but only an elongated shape (*dairghya*), and hence it is a piece of possible evidence for the reality of a shape without colour. Anticipating such an argument from the Vaibhāṣikas, Vasubandhu answers that some sort of not too manifest (*avyakta*, i.e. *īṣad-vyakta*) 'colour' is nevertheless present in this case to make the supposed elongated shape visible.[30]

This dispute seems to lead to one of the interesting problems in the philosophy of perception that were discussed during the empiricism–rationalism controversy in the West. There is also an important connection with Nyāya which wishes to establish 'intimacy' between the objects of vision and touch. First, let me refer to Locke's version of the problem, which is usually dubbed as Molyneux's question (raised by one of Locke's admirers, Molyneux, in a letter:)

Suppose a man *born* blind, and now adult, and taught by his *touch* to distinguish

[29] See note 21, ch. 6.
[30] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, pp. 32–3 and 573–8.

between a cube and a sphere of the same metal, and nighly of the same bigness, so as to tell, when he felt one and the other, which is the cube, which the sphere. Suppose then the cube and sphere placed on a table, and the blind man be made to see: *quaere, whether by his sight, before he touched them,* he could now distinguish and tell which is the globe, which the cube?[31]

Locke agreed with Molyneux that the answer is no. For our purpose, I would rephrase and restate the problem below.

If a blind man feels a cube by touch only and names it by *N* and then suddenly (through a miracle) his eyesight is restored, he would not be able, seeing the same cube, to use the same name *N* to identify it. For what he *feels* by touch and what he sees (the cube shape) are two different sorts of thing (at least his senses would tell him so) so that it does not warrant the identification. This is supposed to be true (even probably experimentally valid) despite the fact that we do commonly identify the cube by both senses, vision and touch.

The Lockian reply to Molyneux's question supports the Sautrāntika critique of the Vaibhāṣika view, as well as what is called in the Indian context the (*vyavasthā*) 'restriction' theory of ways of knowing (*pramāṇa*). This theory states that the domain of objects for each sense-faculty is exclusive and separate. The world of the visible is entirely different from the world of the tangible, and they do not intersect at any point, just as the world of sound (the audible) is separate from the world of smell or taste and they do not intersect. The Buddhist insists on the strict 'restriction' (*vyavasthā*) theory: not only each sense has its own exclusive 'domain' (*āyatana*) but also the domain of perception (the world of unique particulars, *svalakṣaṇa*) and that of judgement and inference are mutually exclusive. The opposite is called the 'mixture' (*saṃplava*) theory. According to this theory (which is upheld by the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika and other non-Buddhist philosophers) the same object may be known or established through different sources or ways of knowing (*pramāṇas*). It is of course admitted that senses (such as sight, taste) have different domains or worlds of objects in which they operate individually. We cannot *taste* what we hear, nor can we *hear* what we smell. It is in general contended that, except for the sense of sight, other senses have their restricted domain. Naturally an object of perception, visual perception in particular, can also be the object of inference. It may be argued that the fragrance that is grasped by my sense-organ is a unique particular and hence very

[31] J. Locke, *Essay*, Bk. II. ix. 8.

different from the object of inference where we infer that the rose has a fragrance, or even the idea of fragrance conveyed by the word 'fragrance'. This type of 'restriction' as regards the percepts and what is inferred or conveyed by words, is accepted even in the 'mixture' (*saṃplava*) theory. But since it is admitted in this theory that we see *perceptually* the material objects, bodies, chairs, tables etc., it is also argued here that the same can be inferred or referred to by words.

Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, however, maintains a view which is notable. A follower of Nyāya is a *direct realist* and therefore holds that we can grasp the same material body by both the sense of touch and that of vision. Not only do we see the material body, the chair, but also touch the same body. Nyāya accepts the 'restriction' theory with regard to other sense-objects. It would say, for example, that we smell the fragrance of the flower, not the flower itself, and we taste the sweetness of sugar, not the lump of sugar itself. Using an example of Berkeley, Armstrong has argued that we can even *hear* the coaches running along the street even without looking at them as much as we can see them if we want to. Nyāya rejects such a stronger version of direct realism, according to which we can smell, taste, touch, hear, and see the material objects directly.

Nyāya therefore allows 'mixture' (or *saṃplava*) in the case of vision and touch, in the case of (perceptual) judgement and inference. Nyāya would say that the same property, shape of the thing, can be both touched and seen (a point on which the Sautrāntika apparently, and rightly from the Buddhist point of view, disagreed). Furthermore Nyāya contends that the same thing, the propertied object or the 'shaped' body is also seen and touched by us. For Vaibhāṣika, however there is no real 'shaped' body to be seen and touched! The Vaibhāṣikas say that just as there are colour-atoms there are also shape-atoms or 'configuration-atoms' (*saṃsthāna-paramāṇu*) which create the impression (*prajñapti*) of 'long', 'short', etc. when they are arranged in the relevant ways. The Sautrāntikas deny shape-atoms; for them shapes are only phenomenally real (*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* IV 3).

How would Nyāya answer Molyneux's question when it is formulated and modified in the above manner? It would say that one sees, of course, the same cube one touched before (when one was blind, for example), but one's inability to use the same name *N* to name what one sees now (assuming this to be a proven fact) can be accounted for in a different way. It is certainly true for Nyāya that the person concerned sees *N* under the circumstances. But seeing *N* is not the same thing as

seeing it as *N*. Moreover to use *N* to name it we need to see it as *N*. For simply seeing *N* is not a sufficient condition for our being able to judge it to be *N*. The blind man suddenly gaining eyesight miraculously may initially have difficulties in identifying as *N* the cube he sees now, but after another try (after, for example, touching it again blindfolded and then seeing it again) he would be able to bridge 'the gap' and claim that he grasps the same object (thing) by both vision and touch. This answer will probably not do full justice to the original 'Molyneux's question', but it is apparently sufficient for the reformulated question that I have posed above. This also clarifies the Nyāya position on the 'restriction' (*vyavasthā*) theory *vis-à-vis* the 'mixture' (*saṃplava*) theory.

8

Perception as Inference

'You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.'
'How on earth did you know that?' I asked in astonishment.
A. CONAN DOYLE

8.1 Seeing and Inferring

'SEEING' in ordinary usage has acquired as very elastic meaning. I can suddenly see why my mail was not delivered yesterday when an explanation (e.g. postal holidays) is given today. I can see almost everything in this room while sitting in this chair, so could my nine-year-old daughter, and so could a Sherlock Holmes or a Dr Watson. But consider the following. I see the new edition of the Encyclopaedia at the corner of the bookcase from this chair. My daughter presumably sitting in the same chair sees the Encyclopaedia (or, probably, those books her Daddy calls the Encyclopaedia). A Sherlock Holmes would see not only the new edition, but probably also the Oxford shop from which the volumes were purchased and perhaps even that they had not been used by me for the last six months!

It could be argued that it is unfair or unjustified to claim that sitting in the same chair, from the same vantage point, A can see what B cannot, while both supposedly possess visual organs of the same power or capacity or physical quality. Obviously, it will be suggested that 'seeing' involves varying degrees of inference. Sherlock Holmes's perception that the new edition had not been used by me for about six months would have been based upon an inference: he noticed, for example, the layer of dust on the volumes (and, let us say, he conveyed to Dr Watson that that was how he came to see what he saw). My perception of the new edition can also arguably be called an inference, for it is coupled with my prior knowledge that I bought the new edition myself several months ago. Whenever I look in that direction, I almost instantaneously see that there is the new edition. Arguably, I do not now even have to 'notice' the particular colour-tint (*rūpa*) of those volumes in order to see that there are those volumes. How about my nine-year-old daughter's perception? It is not easily decidable as an

inference. It will be said that my daughter, if she were much younger than nine years, does not actually (visually) see the Encyclopaedia but only the front portion of its outer surface. She might not even know that the Encyclopaedia is there. How about a baby, who has just learnt to speak a few words among which the word 'Enyclopaedia' is not included? In such cases, we would be reluctant to impute inference. Why? Is it only because they cannot articulate their 'seeing' or awareness in language or in words? Does the mere ability to put things into words involve inference, but not necessarily an awareness of what they express? If our answer is affirmative, do we have to accept the consequence that the mute can only see and never infer? Is every case of seeing a case of inference? Is it only a matter of variation in the degree, to which our seeings are 'recognized' as inference? Does cognition necessarily involve some minimal processing of information? Can there be pure sensations which are cognitive but not necessarily interpretative in any conceivable sense? All these are important questions in the philosophy of perception. We will deal with only some of them here and see how by our one set of answers to these questions we weave together a theory of perception, and how a different set of answers can be integrated into a rival theory.

We perceive things and misperceive them as well. This fact of misperception is used as an argument in favour of the inferentiality of perception. In the old Indian story of King Udayana, the king went on a hunting expedition to a jungle with all his army. There he *saw*, or it seemed to him, that there was an elephant in the distance by a tree. Since the king was an expert in taming wild elephants by playing on his lute, he ordered his army to stay back while he himself proceeded towards the so-called elephant playing upon his lute. It was, however, only a wooden replica of the forequarters of an elephant, and armed soldiers of the enemy king were hiding behind it. King Udayana was thus tricked because, as a philosopher would say, he only inferred from what he actually saw, a wooden replica of an elephant's forequarters, that a real animal was there. Cases of such misperception clearly show the 'gap' between what we see, with our sense of sight in this case, and what we in fact *infer* from a piece of some sensory datum or evidence. Inference, if it is not a 'deductive' one, can be either right or wrong even when the evidence or the datum cannot be called into question.[1]

[1] In fact, it may be claimed that inference is seldom deductive. G. Harman has recently claimed: 'There are neither inductive arguments nor deductive inferences. There are only deductive arguments and inductive inferences.' (*Thought*, p. 162.)

In the case of King Udayana, it was a wrong inference. But ordinarily, this will be called a misperception. Why?

The above point is sometimes made in another way. It is commonly said by modern epistemologists that our everyday normal perceptual judgements always 'go beyond' the sensory experiences which give rise to them, for those judgements carry implications which would not be carried by any 'strict account' of that experience. Nothing that common sense takes to be a physical object can be *perceived* without the occurrence of some sensory experience. In seeing an elephant we always *go beyond* the given and this *going beyond* can be construed as an inference, right or wrong. Looking outside the window I can see hats and cloaks and coats that are moving and from them I can infer that there are people there, although in ordinary usage I may say that I *see* the people. But properly speaking, I see only hats and coats, not men. (Descartes uses this example in *Second Meditation* but his own view about the connection between seeing and inferring was not clear in this context. See Chisholm.)[2] Since hats and coats are not in some sense parts of men (for they, in fact, cover or hide the bodies of men), there are good grounds for arguing that we do not *see* men in this case. As Descartes himself asks: 'Nevertheless what do we see from the window except hats and coats which might cover automata?' Looking at the moon, if I have to assert that I see not the moon but only the front side of the moon, then there seems to be some oddity creeping into our understanding or our use of the term 'see'. The objector here takes a stance which we can call the 'do-not-see-the-other-side-of-the-moon' stance. For if we admit the moon to be a whole, a material body which has parts but which is distinct from such parts, then we cannot maintain that such a whole or a material body would for ever remain unperceived or unperceivable. If bodies or wholes are not established as our 'perceptual firsts', as objects of our direct perception (and not simply objects of mediate perceptions), then our claim for their independent reality seems to dwindle. For the mediate perception can be arguably shown to be an inference, and the inference can be shown to be based upon such inductive premisses as will never give us the required certainty which could establish the independent reality of the object (the whole) itself.

In three short sentences, *Nyāyasūtras* 2.1.30–2 discuss the crucial question: whether or not our sensory perceptual awareness involves an

[2] R. Chisholm, pp. 154 ff.

inference. This succinct argument was elaborated further by Vātsyāyana and then by Uddyotakara and Vācaspati in their commentaries and sub-commentaries.. The opponent here is presumably the Buddhist. *Nyāyasūtra* 2.1.30 states the opponent's argument: 'perceptual awareness is inference, for this awareness is derived from our apprehension of a part'. Whenever we are visually aware of a tree that is present before our eyes, do we *see* it directly? The usual answer is this: A little reflection shows that we in fact *infer* it (and do not see it directly) from our (visual) grasping of its front part or piece, for only the front part is visible to our eyes.

Nyāyasūtra 2.1.31 answers this argument from the Nyāya point of view: 'No. For by perception we are aware of even that part which we apprehend.'

The opponent apparently claimed that *all* perceptual awareness would in fact be inference. Hence, Nyāya tried to win the first round in the debate by pointing out that the sensory (visual) awareness of the front piece or the surface is after all perceptual, and hence not all cases of perception involve inference. For in order to draw inference we must depend upon evidence and that evidence must have eventually a perceptual basis. Otherwise, there will be an infinite regress. The opponent may, however, allow the possibility of sensory perception of the front surface of a three-dimensional opaque material object. But his main claim is that the so-called visual awareness of the object itself, say a tree, is not perceptual at all, for it is based on inference. The Nyāya reply is given in the next *sūtra* 2.1.32 (although Vācaspati doubts whether it is to be read as a *sūtra*): 'There cannot be such an awareness (i.e. perceptual awareness of only the front piece), for the *whole* (tree) is present there (in that front piece)'.[3] The word 'present' needs some explanation. Ordinarily, we may say or agree to say that a part or a piece resides, or is present, in the whole ('The branch is *in* the tree'), but Nyāya argues that it is also possible to say that the whole in some sense resides, or is present, in its parts. In other words, we have to say that the tree is also present in its branches, trunk, etc. For if the tree is not present in its branches, etc. where else could it be present? The ambiguity of the ordinary expression 'is present in' is enough for Nyāya to claim, somewhat counter-intuitively, that the tree is contained in its parts, and hence must be present in each simultaneously, as much as the parts, the branches etc. are contained in the tree. According to

[3] See Vācaspati under NS 2.1.32.

Nyāya ontological description, the tree is 'contained' in the parts by the relation of inherence (i.e. it inheres in its parts) while a part is contained in the whole tree by the reverse relation of inherence. Hence I may *see* the tree in the branches much as I see branches in the tree.

On this point Bhāsarvajña has argued as follows:

(Objection): Surely we all cognize that the branch is *in* the tree, the horn is *in* the cow. Hence how can the parts (limbs) be the substratum (of the whole)?

(Answer): No. That is cognized differently. An awareness that the trees, etc. are substrata (of branches, etc.) arises in persons who see that when the wholes such as a tree stand as they do, the parts such as a branch do not fall down due to the resistance generated by the connection with other parts below. But the parts are substrata in the sense that the wholes exist only if the parts are there, but disappear if the parts are absent.[4]

Bhāsarvajña says that our notion of substratum-hood is not always guided by a single consideration such as the resistance to falling, offered by certain items. For we do say 'Look at your face *in* the mirror'. The mirror surely does not resist the falling down of any face (or even the image of the face). Hence the notion of substratumhood is guided by different considerations in different cases.[5]

As against the Buddhist, Nyāya wishes to establish the following propositions:

(A) The whole (= the tree) is a distinct entity, and by the same token, a distinct perceptual entity, over and above the summing up of parts.
(B) The whole is present in its parts.

Regarding (B), something has been already stated. Regarding (A), the next three aphorisms, *Nyāyasūtras* 2.1.33–5 provide some arguments in a succinct form. The opponent may argue that our perception of the tree as distinct from the parts presupposes the existence of the tree as a whole, a distinct entity, and since such a proposition needs proofs to establish it, it would be dubious to claim, prior to such proofs, that we *see* the tree as distinct. *Sūtra* 2.1.33 says: 'A doubt persists since (the distinction of) the whole needs to be established.' *Sūtra* 2.1.34 answers by a *reductio* form of argument: '(But) nothing can be apprehended unless the whole is established (as a distinct percept).' This is a cryptic

[4] Bhāsarvajña, p. 124.
[5] See also my forthcoming paper 'On the Locative in Sanskrit', *Indian Journal of Linguistics*.

statement of an important argument. The claim is that our sensory awareness even of a part or a piece or a surface would be impossible unless the 'whole' is accepted as a distinct entity, of which there would be parts, pieces, or surfaces.

There are two sides to this argument. First, being faced with a dilemma, Nyāya seems to take the bull by the horns and claim that, short of an atomism of the Buddhist kind (which was criticized by Diṅnāga), we cannot be said to apprehend a part or parts unless we apprehend the whole. For parts are parts only in relation to the whole, and each part must have further parts or pieces. Hence even a part is a whole in relation to its own parts. We can regress in this way until we reach the 'partless' atoms. Atoms are only parts, never wholes, for they have no further parts of their own. But atoms are by definition imperceptible. Thus it is shown that if perception has to grasp anything, it must grasp things that have parts or constituents. This means that unless the imperceptible atoms come together to form a *whole*, either provisionally or really, there will be nothing except the impartite, imperceptible atoms left there to be perceived and since such atoms are imperceptible, there will be nothing to be perceived! Guided by such considerations, Praśastapāda has stated the Vaiśeṣika thesis (which is also acceptable in Nyāya): 'A necessary condition for a thing (a substance) X to be perceived is that X is constituted of parts, i.e. other things as constituents.'[6]

The other side of the argument makes a weaker claim. I cannot be said to be seeing only the front part, or the front surface of the moon unless I concede that there is the moon, a whole, of which I see the front surface only. In other words, the whole has to be established or presupposed first in order that I can claim to see a part thereof. It is not being said here that if I see the part, I see also the whole. But the claim is that if our perception of a part or a surface entails the existence of that part or that surface then it should entail by the same token the existence of the whole of which it is a part or a surface. However, it leaves open the question whether this whole is apprehended by perception or inference.

The Buddhist atomist would dispute the above position by saying that only a 'collection' or a 'conglomeration' of atomic constituents constitutes the visible particle and the coming together of several visible particles constitutes the visible surface or the front piece we see.

[6] Praśastapāda, p. 443 (see *Nyāyakandalī*).

This will mean that we only see a coloured expanse, and neither parts (or surfaces) nor any whole created by, and distinct from, the parts, are lying in front of us to be seen. We shall presently see how far this atomism can be sustained, if we wish to keep it distinguished from a form of idealistic phenomenalism. We may continue with the *Nyāyasūtra* argument to establish wholes such as a pot, a tree, or a table, which are not parts of anything else (cf. *antyāvayavin*).

Nyāyasūtra 2.1.35. says: 'For (if a whole is established) we can explain *holding* and *pulling*.' One can certainly grab a moving body (a whole) by a part of it and hold it, i.e. stop the whole from moving. Similarly one can pull a whole body simply by pulling a part of it. Of course the pulling and holding work very well with wholes which are solid bodies, where particles are closely conjoined. In the case of water or air bodies, this would be ineffectual. But the point here is to cite clear cases where wholes can be indubitably established as distinct (see below).

8.2 *The Vaiśeṣika Atomism*

Atomism however is not incompatible with the doctrine of wholes as distinct entities. The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas were also atomists. They believed in the reality of material atoms. Atoms, for them, are unbreakable parts of the breakable bodies. They are themselves partless but they constitute permanent parts of matter. They are substrata of some material qualities such as colour, and moisture (in the case of water atoms). The colour of the atom is not perceived because its substratum is not a perceptible entity.[7] When two or more material atoms are conjoined, a new body is created. How partless atoms can be conjoined, however, becomes a highly controversial issue. For if partless atoms are put together, we will get only an entity of atomic size.

Let me explain. The concept of joining together implies first that the constituent elements (the joined elements) have parts which 'touch' one another, and second that the joined entity is bigger than either of the constituents (in size). '*A* is joined with *B*' implies:

[7] We cannot dismiss all this as a pre-scientific theory that is only a matter of historical interest today. Our post-scientific theories have not fared any better. I have already referred to how A. J. Ayer prefers a modern theory which has distant resonance in the Abhidharma theory of atoms (see note 27, ch. 7). It is contended in the Abhidharma that a colour-atom is imperceptible contingently (because of its minuteness '*saukṣmat*'), but a cluster of them is visible.

(1) part of *A* is joined with part of *B*; and
(2) *AB* is larger than *A* (or *B*)

Nyāya believes that (2) is also a consequence of (1). For (1) is a more fundamental consequence of joining. Thus if (1) does not obtain, (2) cannot obtain! When an atom *x* is joined with another atom *y* we cannot say however that a part of *x* is joined with a part of *y*. For atoms by definition have no parts! (If atoms had parts they would be breakable further. But atoms are conceived as unbreakable, that is, indestructible parts of breakable material elements.) Now if (1) does not obtain with regard to atoms, (2) does not obtain either. In other words, if atoms are joined we will get an entity of atomic size, not bigger! Such is the paradox of the (non-mathematical) infinitesimal! The Buddhist would say: so much the worse for the realist's (the Naiyāyikas') conception of the material atoms.

To circumvent the difficulty, Nyāya says that two material atoms are first combined to create a new material body called dyad (*dvyaṇuka*), which is neither 'partless' nor unbreakable (indestructible). When dyads are created in this way, a number of such dyads can be joined in the usual way (for they have parts) to create larger (the visible and breakable) particles. This is the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika doctrine of the physical constitution of matter. To sum up:

(1) There are partless material atoms. They are imperceptible because of their minuteness.
(2) Dyads, created by partless atoms, are bodies or wholes which have parts, although they are not larger. They are 'atomic' in size.
(3) Hence there are breakable wholes which are atomic in size (a dyad) as well as non-breakable bodies which are also atomic in size (a single atom).
(4) Bodies created by other bodies are called wholes. Hence dyads are wholes. Atoms are not wholes. For a whole without parts would be a contradiction in terms.
(5) Finally, there are bodies or wholes which are not parts of any further whole, e.g. a tree, a pot, a table.
(6) Usually, parts have further parts, and hence they can be called wholes from the point of view of their own parts. But atoms are only parts having no further parts of their own.

As against this Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika atomism, we can set the Buddhist phenomenalistic atomism. Atoms are better described in the Buddhist

system as atomic stimulants of our sense-organs. Atoms are not substrata of sensible material qualities such as colour or taste, but are themselves *subtle* forms (instances) of such qualities. I would prefer to call them 'quality-atoms' as opposed to the 'thing-atoms' of the Vaiśeṣikas. The Buddhist frequently refers to entities like colour-atoms, taste-atoms, smell-atoms, and touch-atoms. For the Buddhist radically rejects the 'substratum' theory of any attribute or quality. In Buddhism, the atoms are much like the uniquely particular phenomena of the Western phenomenalists. As against this, the Vaiśeṣika atomism is of a piece with the 'molecular' doctrine of some proto-physics. According to the Buddhist, the gross colour expanse which I see and call a table is only a conglomeration of the subtle colour-atoms. The colour-atoms are themselves individually invisible, but being collected together they become visible as much as a single hair remains invisible from a short distance while a tuft of hair can be seen from the same distance.

The Buddhist atomist however does not admit the 'creation' of the gross visible entity out of subtle atoms. As *Nyāyasūtra* 2.1.36 formulated the Buddhist argument, what we see is an atom-cluster, not a whole or a body, and similarly we see a forest as a cluster of trees rather than as a separate entity called a forest, or we see an army as a combination of soldiers, elephants, horses, etc., rather than as a separate entity called an army. This is the old Buddhist puzzle, viz. you cannot see the trees for the forest, nor can you see the forest for the trees. There may be some justification for contending that a solid material body such as a chair or a ball is a distinct entity over and above the cluster of atoms or parts out of which it is constituted. For we do say that I grab the chair when I can grab only a part of it and I pull the chair by pulling only its handle or leg. When parts are loosely scattered all over the place as they are in the case of a forest or an army, then it may be argued that there is little point in claiming them to be entities distinct from the parts. Naiyāyikas in general would concede this point for such entities as an army or a forest seem to be very different from such material bodies as an apple or a chair. However Uddyotakara here parted company with his fellow Naiyāyikas and argued that even an army or a forest should be regarded as distinct from its constituents! But more on this later.

Let us revert to the original thesis of the Buddhist: What passes for perceptual awareness e.g. that of a tree, is actually an inference. Vātsyāyana raises the following question: What do we actually *infer*, if

we infer at all in such cases? Do we infer after sighting the front part or the surface that there are other unseen parts, the backside, the middle part, etc.? If this is what we actually infer then we cannot explain how the awareness that finally emerges is said to be the awareness of *a tree*. For what is called 'a tree' is certainly not identical with the unseen parts etc. It may be said that we do infer the unseen parts (i.e. their presence) and then by a sort of a 'connective cognitive act' (*pratisandhāna*) we connect the front part that has been seen with the inferred unseen parts, and thereby become aware of the tree (the whole thing).

The above answer may presumably be acceptable to a Naiyāyika like Vātsyāyana. For although it does not establish the Nyāya thesis (the whole, the familiar body, is perceived directly), it is not incompatible with the reality of such familiar bodies. The position seems to be compatible with some form of representationalism or causal theory, and it is not clear whether Vātsyāyana would fully subscribe to it (for the majority of Naiyāyikas would reject it). Vātsyāyana finds, however, a technical flaw in his opponent's version of representationalism. The thesis states that the whole (the tree) is inferred from what we see, the front surface. But in the above it has conceded that we infer the presence of the unseen parts first, and then mentally put all bits and pieces together (by *pratisandhāna*) to apprehend the whole tree. The last cognitive episode can hardly be called an inference in the strict sense of the term. Technically, the flaw in the argument of the opponent, according to Vātsyāyana, is called *pratijñāhāni*, 'loss of the (original) thesis', one of the standard twenty-three or twenty-four flaws or 'checks' in a debate situation (*nigrahasthāna*). In other words, the debater (the opponent) has claimed to prove one thesis and then changed or modified it while he was trying to prove it. (See Chapter 3.3.) We may say that he is one who has changed 'meanings' in midstream and hence guilty of a notorious manoeuvre.

Vātsyāyana's point may be understood as follows: A model case of inference would be an inference from smoke to fire. But such an inference is accepted as sound only if a concomitance (*vyāpti*) between occurrences of smoke and occurrences of fire can be established and this is possible because the occurrence of fire can be independently established through perception – independently, that is, of such an inference. There is, however, supposedly no way of establishing the existence of the material body, the whole i.e. the tree, except by an inference from the observation of the front piece. But since the

material body is said to be never perceived it is impossible to establish the required connection of concomitance between the perceived part and the body (the whole). Hence such an inference cannot be rationally justified.

To answer this objection, the proto-representationalist may use a different model for the causal inference. This is technically called *sāmānyato dṛṣṭa* in the Indian tradition. (See Chapter 8.4 below.) This would base the causal inference upon some general principles and thereby assure us of the invariable correspondence between the relevant causes and effects, between what is signified, the inferable, and the inferential sign (cf. *liṅga-liṅgin*). In this way, a satisfactory argument can be produced for the existence of the material body. If this is done, then, as H. P. Grice has admirably argued, the proto-representationalist 'cannot be possibly accused of having *asserted* that material objects are unobservable', for he has apparently succeeded in making us reasonably assured of the existence of the familiar material bodies.[8] Vātsyāyana's reply to this would be, I presume, that the opponent may in this way succeed in establishing the material bodies but he has changed his 'meaning' of inference in midstream. (See further Chapter 8.4 below.)

If the wholes are accepted as real and distinct, then Nyāya insists that the inferentiality of the whole has very little chance to succeed. Vātsyāyana says that if we can be said to be perceptually aware of the front part on the ground that we have sensory connection with the front part, then by the same token we must say that we are perceptually aware of the whole tree also, for the required sensory connection exists as much with the front part as it does with the whole. (For if the visual organ can 'reach' the place where the front part is present, it can also reach the whole which must also be present in the same place! Or, to put it more precisely, it is not the case that the whole is not present in the spatial location where the front part is present.) Viewed in this way, it would indeed be difficult to deny that we see most of the time the tree as a whole. For if the necessary and sufficient condition for seeing the front piece is the eye's connection with the object of vision, the necessary and sufficient condition for seeing the tree, as a whole, has also to be the eye's connection with the tree. I say 'most of the time' here because sometimes when only a very small portion of the front piece is exposed to our vision, we may resort to the inference of the

[8] H. P. Grice, p. 468.

whole, rightly or wrongly. (Recall our story of King Udayana and the fake elephant!)

8.3 The Whole-Part Controversy

There are several interconnected questions which need to be sorted out at this stage. The Nyāya position depends upon, among other things, the following theses:

(1) The whole (= the tree) is a distinct reality. It is the familiar body which we recognize.
(2) The whole is not itself the substratum of the parts, but it resides in the parts (it inheres in parts). Roughly the parts are not in the whole, but the whole is in the parts. The whole cannot exist unless the parts do, but the converse does not hold.
(3) Although the whole and its parts (the trees and branches, etc.) are distinct realities (distinct material things), they may share occupancy of the same physical space or spatial location. The same physical space is occupied jointly by the whole as well as by all its parts.
(4) Ordinarily, two material things cannot occupy the same spatial location as this violates their impenetrability condition (*sapratighatva*). But if they are related by the relation of inherence (*samavāya*), they can occupy the same spatial location. Such is the benefit of the *samavāya* relation.[9]
(5) Sensory perceptual awareness, if it is a true one, results from a sensory connection with the object.
[The stronger Nyāya thesis is that the sensory organ must receive the object either by 'reaching *out*' for it as in the case of the visual organ, or by the object reaching the organ as in the case of all other organs. But this part of the proto-physical theory of Nyāya may be ignored.][10]
(6) We are perceptually aware of the whole (= the tree), for our sense-faculty 'reaches' the whole.

In modern writing, much has been said about the 'grammar' of the verb 'see'. G. E. Moore says: 'Whenever we talk roughly of seeing any

[9] B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 55–9.
[10] For an interesting report about the dispute between Nyāya and the Buddhist see Dinnāga (PS) I, verse 17, and Uddyotakara, pp. 33–6 (1916 edn.).

object, it is true that in another and stricter sense of the word, we only *see a part* of it.'[11] R. Chisholm has compared the verb 'see' with 'live' in this respect and cited that if we say, 'A philosopher lives in Peru', it becomes also true that in some restricted sense, he *lives* in a part of Peru. According to Chisholm, the grammar of the verb 'see' is similar to that of 'hit', 'destroy', or 'inhabit', but unlike that of 'carry', 'own' or 'contain'.[12] The same feature of seeing seems to have been noted by R. Hirst. He calls it 'the partitive character of perceiving'.[13]

A car can hit a truck only by hitting a part of it, for it cannot hit all parts of it at the same time. Similarly, I can see the tree only by seeing a part of it. But this seems to me to be only part of the story. While the analogy underlines the fact that it makes perfectly good sense to say with the direct realist that I see the tree just as the car hits the truck, the prevailing argument maintains that there are two senses (uses) of 'seeing'. In one, we see the whole of what we see, in the other, we see only part of what we see (e.g. I see the tree). The argument assumes further that we see in the second sense (i.e. see the tree) only in virtue of our seeing in the first sense (i.e. seeing the front surface). For it is said that the car hits the truck in virtue of the former hitting the rear part of the latter. Thus F. Jackson defines the mediate object of seeing as: 'x is a mediate object of (visual) perception for S at t if S sees x at t, and $(\exists y)$ $(x \neq y)$ (S sees x in virtue of seeing y).[14]

Nyāya would contend here that this way of distinguishing between the immediate and the mediate objects of perception does not hold, for it begs the question. For one can very well see the tree, the whole, without paying any attention to its front part, and in that case it would be wrong to say that he sees the tree in virtue of his seeing its front part, for he does not *see* the front part (or portions of it) at all. Suppose we ask him: 'Did you see the top portion of the front part when you saw the tree?'. He would have to search his memory to answer correctly and may draw a blank on it. It is also legitimate to claim that I first saw the tree and *then* I saw the front part where some leaves had turned yellow. We may indeed refer to Professor Anscombe's comment when she, wishing to establish that there are intentional uses of 'seeing' having intentional objects where no material object is present, claims that no epistemological priority needs to be conferred upon such intentional seeing; she argues that such intentional sentences (presumably representing cases of intentional seeing) 'in a

[11] G. E. Moore (1953), p. 34.
[12] R. Chisholm, p. 156.
[13] R. J. Hirst, p. 190.
[14] F. Jackson, pp. 19–20.

host of the most ordinary cases of reported seeing, are never formulated or considered.'[15]

This seems to be the heart of the matter. The philosophers who accept sense-data are almost unanimous on one point: sense-data are evidentially fundamental and hence epistemologically prior. But this is exactly what Nyāya would like to deny. When we talk about the perception of a familiar, medium-sized opaque body, we are asked usually by the modern philosophers of perception to distinguish between three entities and two relations between them: (i) the familiar body, a tree, (ii) the front part or the surface of the body, and (iii) the sense-datum. The relation between the first two has long been the subject matter of Nyāya discussion. Nyāya calls this relation 'inherence' (= *samavāya*) to underline probably three important factors: (a) inseparability of the body from its front surface, (b) locatability or 'presence' of the body in its parts including the front surface, and (c) the 'causal' role of the parts (including the front surface) in the (initial) emergence or creation of the body as an entity. This last factor is to be understood as implying that the role of the front part be regarded as *causal* in the initial constitution of the familiar body – a body that we could see at any time of its existence. Hence in a very indirect sort of way, the front surface or the part can be said to be 'causally responsible' (specially in the Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika sense of the term 'cause' = *kāraṇa*) for the perception of the familiar body. Nyāya direct realism eliminates the third entity, sense-datum, entirely from the discussion of perception. By giving a different *causal* explanation of perceptual illusion and hallucination Nyāya aims at characterizing the causal factors in a naïve or non-specialist conception of perception. Obviously then, the consideration for the so-called causal relation between the sense-datum and the material object (which has been the cornerstone of modern representationalists and causal theorists) is conspicuous by its absence in the Nyāya system. It is not contended here that a person claims to have a perception of a familiar body in virtue of the occurrence of some sense-impression. However, it may be contended that since the front surface is not as ephemeral as a sense-datum, one can be said to *see* the familiar body *in virtue of* his seeing the front surface. But this, according to Nyāya, would be wrong.

The Nyāya point can be further elaborated by turning our attention to the crucial phrase 'in virtue of'. This expresses some sort of a causal

[15] G. E. M. Anscombe, p. 17.

relation under a liberal interpretation of the term 'causal'. The same sort of liberal interpretation of the term is found in H. P. Grice's reformulation of the causal theory as well as in P. F. Strawson's discussion of causation in perception.[16] But Nyāya has a different axe to grind when it talks about causation in perception. For example, I see the tree not in virtue of my *seeing* the front part but in virtue of my sensory apparatus being connected with, or 'stimulated by', the front part. The sensory stimulation is a physical event which leads to, i.e. causes, my perception. But my *seeing* the front part is a cognitive event (perhaps an intentional act in Brentano's sense), which may, only contingently, arise before my perception of the tree. Therefore the analogy between the car hitting the truck in virtue of its hitting the rear part and my seeing the tree (the whole) in virtue of my seeing the front part breaks down. I think Nyāya scores here an important point in favour of direct realism. In hitting the car I necessarily hit its part but in seeing the tree I need not *see* its surface although the surface may *stimulate* my visual organ.

Sometimes seeing a tree (a whole) has been compared with eating dinner or sitting in a chair (Hirst). I cannot swallow my dinner all at once, neither can I sit in all parts of my chair. But I still eat my dinner and sit in my chair. Similarly, I *see* the tree without seeing all its parts at a time. I quote G. E. Moore again: 'Since there are parts we do not see, it is not proper to say that we do not see it at all.[17] Nyāya would accept this analogy only to the extent that it shows the legitimacy of the uses of 'see' in 'I see the tree'. But it would reject the analogy as before when it is extended to show that I see the tree only in virtue of my seeing its part just as I sit in this chair only in virtue of my sitting in one part of it. For my seeing the front part of the tree is a cognitive event only contingently connected with my seeing the tree, while my sitting in a part of the chair is a physical event 'causally' or necessarily connected with my sitting in the chair. The physical event, my visual apparatus being stimulated by the front part, is however necessarily or causally connected, according to Nyāya, with my seeing the tree.

The opponents of direct realism have often argued that there are at least two senses of 'see' used in the sentence 'Smith and Jones see the same building, the Campanile', while in fact they are looking at it from two different points of view. The example is due to Benson Mates who argues that in one sense of 'see' the assertion is false for Smith and

[16] P. F. Strawson (1974), pp. 66–84; H. P. Grice, pp. 460 ff.
[17] G. E. Moore (1953), p. 34; R. J. Hirst, p. 40.

Jones see very different things from their respective vantage-points, but it is true presumably in another sense of 'see' (when we talk of seeing the whole).[18] F. Jackson disagrees with Mates saying that the real culprit is not the verb 'see' (as Mates suggests) but the grammatical object of the same verb. For Jones and Smith, Jackson continues, can be said to see the same thing, the Campanile, *in virtue of* seeing different things, i.e. different parts or aspects of the same building or the same bell-tower. The overall situation, for Jackson, is best described in a semi-formal way by: $(\exists x)$ $(\exists y)$ $(\exists z)$ ($x \neq y$ AND x and y are aspects of z AND Jones sees x AND Smith sees y AND (hence) Jones and Smith see z).[19] Nyāya would however give a different analytic expansion of the situation as we shall see presently. Nyāya would agree with Jackson when he claims that both Jones and Smith see the *same* extended object and there is no equivocation in 'see' here. But Nyāya would deny that there are necessarily four cases of seeing here as Jackson seems to suggest.

For Nyāya, Jones and Smith can both see the same Campanile from different vantage-points and their seeing in each case is conditioned by a (non-cognitive = physical) connection between, in either case, their sense-faculty and the relevant object (the Campanile). But neither of these two events of seeing, which may very well happen at the same time, entail necessarily, as Jackson or a representationalist invariably suggests, two further cases of seeing, namely, seeing by Jones and Smith of two different aspects. Seeing of any aspect or a part of the Campanile by Jones (say) may happen at the same time when he sees the Campanile, *but not necessarily* at the same moment. If the perceptual cognition of Jones is expressed by him simply as 'this is the Campanile', then Nyāya says that we cannot infer on the basis of such limited evidence that Jones has also *seen* part of the Campanile, although undoubtedly there has been a physical connection between his sensory apparatus and the front part of the Campanile. This physical connection, however, is only a *necessary and not a sufficient* condition of Jones's seeing aspects or parts of the Campanile. How many times, for instance, does it happen that a perfectly visible and large object lies in front of me in a wide open space and still I do not see it?

It is possible that Jones sees both Campanile and its front part and then he would say that he sees the Campanile as well as its front part,

[18] B. Mates p. 230. [19] F. Jackson, pp. 28–9.

for architecturally the front part may be particularly beautiful. The representationalist argues for a necessary connection between the two seeings, which I am inclined to deny from the Nyāya point of view. My seeing the tree (the whole) does not depend upon or entail my *seeing* the front part. They are only two distinct events of seeing which *may* occur consecutively in quick succession. It would be wrong to construe one as the mediate and the other as immediate perception, as the representationalist seems to insist. Hirst once said that one can be said to see the façade of a building, for example, if 'one particularizes and *thinks* of façades or walls' (my italics).[20] Nyāya is more specific on this point: one needs to direct one's mind through the sense faculty to the façades, rather than to the whole, in order for one to *see* the façades.

We can now look at Uddyotakara's long argument in defence of our independent perception of the whole (= the tree). Uddyotakara argues that if we describe what we are perceptually aware of by the expression 'the tree' then this cannot be the front part only nor can it be the unseen parts that we are supposed to infer. The expression 'the tree' or 'a tree' must describe either the collection of all parts taken together or something distinct from, but causally constituted by, those parts. Uddyoktakara's main contention is that there are difficulties with the first alternative and therefore the second is more plausible.

There is obviously something wrong with our talk of parts or collection of all parts if we do not already concede a whole of which they are parts. Uddyotakara says that 'collection of all parts', 'the front part', 'the rear part', and all such expressions would be empty talk (*nirabhidheyaṃ vākyam*) for there would be nothing of which they would be parts. The parthood of parts, the argument continues, consists in their allowing the whole to reside therein (by the so-called relation of inherence) and if the whole is rejected as a fiction, the notion of parts would *eo ipso* be fictional.

It may be contended that the common terms 'parts', 'pieces', or 'constituents' have actually metaphorical or figurative uses in our language. By 'parts' we mean those physical entities (atoms included) occupying portions of space in the closest proximity one with the other, in fact, 'touching' one another, but they do not 'causally' co-operate to produce any new entity called 'the whole' distinct from themselves. In other words, parts are parts of such *nominally* existent entities as heaps or clusters. A cluster is not (ordinarily) thought to be a separate entity

[20] R. J. Hirst, p. 40.

apart from those entities that are clustered together. To use a Buddhist expression, it is only 'nominally existent' (*saṃvṛti-sat*) or it has only an imagined existence and our use of such words as 'parts' or 'components' can be explained with reference to such posits as heaps or clusters. After formulating this objection to his own position, Uddyotakara comments that this is a very strange claim indeed:

> Suppose the meaning of the *component* (of a whole) is (only) the property of occupying (different) spatial locations in mutual proximity while being unrelated as (material) cause and effect. Oh! What a verbal sophistication it is to say 'they are not causally related, and yet they are occupants of spatial locations that are connected (closely) with one another'. Indeed, how odd it is to say that they do not mutually co-operate (to do anything), and yet they are called components.[21]

Uddyotakara implies that if parts are called parts because they are physical entities in the closest contact with one another, then this is only a short step from saying that they are causally responsible for, and co-operating among themselves to give rise to, the new entity which we call the whole (= the tree). The 'whole' is not a nominally existent entity like a heap, but is created by the coming together of the parts in the proper way.

The whole, as the Buddhist phenomenalist would argue, is the product of a snythetic awareness called *kalpanā*. Vātsyāyana has used the notion of *pratisandhāna* (see above). This is a sort of connective-recollective cognition due to mental synthesis after one has observed the front part and inferred therefrom the hind part and the middle. This connective-recollective cognition, where we become aware of the whole, may or may not be called a proper inference. Vātsyāyana rightly thought, as we have already seen, that this is an acceptable position (perhaps, that of a representationalist). Uddyotakara refers to Vātsyāyana's formation by '*apare tu*' and apparently does not consider it satisfactory. For he says: 'There cannot arise an awareness of the tree even from a mental synthesis through recollection of items that are non-trees (i.e. front part, rear part and middle part).'[22]

Uddyotakara thinks that a 'connective-recollective' cognition, which we may rightly take to be the result of a mental synthesis, is possible when we can put the pieces together, viz. the front piece, the back piece, and the middle piece. But this does not explain adequately our

[21] Uddyotakara, p. 208 (1916 edn.). The whole–part controversy ranges from p. 207 to p. 251 of the 1916 edn.

[22] Ibid., p. 208.

awareness of the tree (the whole), which undoubtedly arises in us. For the 'connective-recollective' cognition under the above interpretation can only be regarded as cognition of all the pieces together, and not as a *unitive* cognition of the whole. If the whole is never experienced in this way, not even once, we cannot be aware of it (the whole) through any mental synthesis or through imaginative construction. We can add up the portions in cognition but that will give us only portions added up and not the whole (= the tree). I quote Uddyotakara on *pratisandhāna* (= the connective-recollective cognition):

For *pratisandhāna* means an awareness that arises with regard to a different thing, being linked with (literally, 'dyed with') an awareness (recollection) of a previous object. For example, (we say) 'the colour of this object has been perceived by me, also the taste'. However, in your case (the Buddhist case), after the front portion being apprehended (by observation) and the rear portions being inferred, a connective-recollective awareness may arise with the appropriate form 'the front portion (I know) and the rear portions'. But wherefrom the awareness of the tree (= the whole) would arise? For certainly neither the front nor the rear portions are the tree.[23]

Uddyotakara's argument in this context seems to verge on the general problem of identifying the objects of reference. There may be an inference of the form. 'There is the front part, or the tree-like colour presentation there, and therefore there is what we call "a tree" there.' What we call 'a tree' is actually a synthetic entity, according to the Buddhists, posited by putting together bits and pieces of objects of our direct experience (as in the case of the Vaibhāṣika and the Sautrāntika). Uddyotakara says:

If a person does not accept a whole (= a tree, over and above its parts), there would not exist for him (referents of) such expressions 'the front part' or 'the rear part'. Why? 'The front part' refers to that which by belonging to a gross material body separates (from the view) its rear part. 'The rear part' refers to that which is thus separated (from the view). But if you do not admit any whole, whose front part or rear part would be referred to (by such expressions)?[24]

It is apparently argued here that our talk of 'the front part' or 'the rear part' should be empty talk if we do not admit already the whole of which they are said to be parts. The sentence under consideration is: 'I see the front part of the tree.' The argument seems to proceed as follows. If the expression 'the tree' lacks a reference (for there is no whole), 'the front part of the tree' would also lack a reference unless, of

[23] Ibid., p. 210. [24] Ibid., p. 211.

course, we treat this phrase as an unanalysable expression referring to, in the last resort, whatever is seen on the occasion, a sense-datum or an appearance. However, each element of the expression 'the front part of the tree' as well as the phrase itself belongs to an ordinary language where we do learn the meaning of the word quite differently.

The Buddhist would argue that the expression 'the tree' does not lack a reference, for it refers to the synthetic entity (that which is purported to be the whole) which is only a *prajñapti-sat*, an entity whose existence depends solely on our conceptualization of it. We put together the wheels, the horses, the banners, etc. in a particular manner and we become aware of a chariot. In other words, the chariot 'announces' its existence (*prajñapyate*) to us in this way by being the object of a synthesizing awareness, and we call it 'the chariot'. But take apart all these parts and the chariot vanishes into nothingness. The whole is such an object which exists only by virtue of being conceptualized. Therefore the expressions 'the front part of the tree', etc. are not vacuous, for they refer to the parts of that object whose existence is solely dependent upon our conceptualization of it.

Uddyotakara sees some further problem in this position. For he goes on to analyse the position as follows. The Buddhist says that when certain parts (eventually certain atoms; for parts will have further parts) are arranged in a particular way, we call it a chariot. Why? What meaning could we attach to the all important expression 'arranged in a particular way'? It seems that only a particular way of arrangement of parts or atoms, would make us conceptualize something as a chariot, another way would make us conceptualize them as several pieces of wood, etc. and still another way would make it a piece of furniture. But what distinguishes these ways unique to each different conceptualization? We indeed refer to one particular way of arrangement by the expression 'the chariot', the other way by 'a log of wood' and so on. There is an implicit circularity if we say that we conceptualize something to be a chariot when the parts or atoms are arranged in such a way as they ought to be arranged to make the conceptualization of the chariot possible. This amounts to saying that a chariot-like arrangement gives rise to the chariot-concept, and a tree-like arrangement to the tree-concept. But the Buddhist is not a nativist (for whom such concepts may be innate ideas) and the circularity (viz. we notice a chariot-like arrangement if we already have a chariot-concept and we have a chariot-concept if only we have noticed a chariot-like arrangement) can be broken if we admit that whatever we describe as

the chariot-like arrangement is an objective reality independent of our being aware of it, i.e. independent of our conceptualization. Uddyotakara thinks that if these different ways of arrangements of constituents are objective realities then they should be identified as objects of reference for such terms as 'the tree' and 'the chariot'. In other words, they are our *wholes* distinct from their parts. The very fact that they can be dissolved objectively is no argument in favour of their conceptuality or lack of reality, as long as it is maintained that these arrangements could be there in the world even when there is no sentient being to cognize them as such arrangements.[25]

8.4 *Nyāya against Representationalism*

We can briefly reconstruct the Nyāya arguments against the representationalist, according to whom the medium-sized material object would be an acceptable form of reality but only an inferable one. By a 'medium-sized' (*madhyama-parimāṇa*) object we may take anything that is big enough to be visible to the naked eye while at the same time small enough to be 'seen' as a *whole.* The sort of representationalism that Uddyotakara anticipates here is to be distinguished from the Sautrāntika position, according to which it is the gross phenomenon (the gross expanse of colour, shape, etc.) that we are perceptually aware of, but what causes such perceptions of the gross is the cluster of atoms that are there outside. This sort of representationalism regards material objects such as trees, chariots, and tables, as real independently of their parts or atoms. It is believed here that the external (material) object (the whole) is the causal factor that *affects* the mind through the channel of senses such that the mind assumes the 'form' of that object. Perception is explained as a 'modification of the mind' (*citta-vṛtti,* a mental event) that comprehends the specific nature of the object. Each object has both specific and general characteristics in itself. The object is actually inferred from the mental 'form', the mental representation of it. This is a hypothetical reconstruction of a

[25] It would indeed be strange to regard common-sense bodies, tables, trees, and chariots, as mere conceptual entities having only nominal reality, while the subvisible particles are said to be real. A similar view is expressed even in modern times, when one claims that according to physics this desk of mine is only a swarm of vibrating molecules. For, as Quine has pointed out, it is by reference to the common-sense bodies that the very notions of reality and evidence are acquired, and that the concepts which have to do with physical particles or even with sense-data tend to be framed and phrased. If the bodies are posits, then we have to remember Quine's warning that 'posits are not *ipso facto* unreal' (W. V. Quine, 1976, pp. 251–4).

sort of representationalism on the basis of Uddyotakara's comments.

The wholes (trees, tables, bodies) may either exist or they may not. If they do not, we have to accept some sort of atomism and say that the objects of reference of such terms as 'trees', 'tables', and 'pots' are clusters of atomic simples or constituents or parts. But if the wholes exist as distinct realities over and above their parts or constituents, they are to be apprehended through either perception or inference. Nyāya argues that if the wholes exist, then they must also be perceived at some time or other. For otherwise we would not be able to infer them even at other times. This is of a piece with saying that if the physical objects are never seen by us but they are only inferable from the representation of them in perceptions, then such an inference will never be warranted by a required inductive concomitance (*vyāpti*) based upon at the end some perceptual evidence! Seeing only part of a horse from behind while the rest of the body is hidden, we may (rightly or wrongly) infer that there is a horse there because in such a case we have already seen horses (= wholes) many times before and thereby (perceptually) acquired the required inference-warranting relation between the whole (= the horse) and the part that we see here. But if we have never seen a horse before, such an inference would be impossible. Hence the conclusion is that in normal cases, where we are all of a sudden aware of a horse in front of us, we actually see it and do not indulge in any 'unconscious' inference about it.

This may be countered by saying that there is another model for inference accepted by both Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Saṃkhya-Yoga alike. It is called *sāmānyato dṛṣṭa*[26] – a technical name for inferring the imperceptibles. Many entities like the self, space, time, and atoms in the Vaiśeṣika system are inferred in this way. The 'unmanifest' matter is inferred following the same principle in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system. The principle is roughly this. Our knowledge of the inference-warranting relation is partly given by self-evident knowledge of some general principle and partly supported by a very general example. Spatial displacement of bodies, for example, implies movement. I see John here now and five minutes later see him on the other side of the street as he walks over. If I see some celestial body at two different spatial locations, I can easily infer that it moves (provided we are stationary) although the motion of such a body is not perceivable.

[26] For further discussion of this model of inference, see my *Logic, Language and Reality: An Introduction to Indian Philosophical Studies*, ch. I. 4. See also N. Schuster, pp. 341–95.

Using the same principle of inference we can infer the existence of the self from the evidence such as the presence of desire and cognition. If desire and cognition are regarded as qualities or attributes, since there is self-evident certainty that qualities need substances to reside in, a substance is inferred to exist. Armed with this principle of inference, our hypothetical representationalist would argue that the wholes, i.e. the chariot, the tree, and the horse, are all inferred on the basis of what is directly evident or directly perceived. If what is directly perceived is a quality, we can infer the thing (the whole) as being the substratum of that quality.

The introduction of a different model for inference extends the scope of inferability. We may note that H. P. Grice, almost in a similar context, has discussed the smoke–fire model of inference to show how the sceptic would use it unfairly to reject the causal analysis of perception. Grice's criticism of this point is rather intriguing.[27] He says, first, that the existence of the perceived material object need not *always* be the 'conclusion of a causal inference'. This claim is actually based upon a move (on the part of Grice) which seems to yield a lot of ground to direct realism. He says that it is incorrect to describe many of our perceptual beliefs as 'inferences' of any kind. The sceptic, according to him, wrongly insists 'that innocence, not guilt, has to be proved', but normally any demand that one should justify one's perceptual claim about seeing, for example, a table in normal daylight, can be flatly denied until specific grounds for doubting it have been indicated. This argument seems to come very close to endorsing the claim of direct perception of material bodies on many occasions.

Grice's second criticism against the sceptic is that the fire–smoke model of inference should never have been introduced in this connection. This is, of course, true, and, as I have already noted, it coincides with Vātsyāyana's intuition. Grice, however, puts his objection as follows: 'It is then an objectionable feature of the sceptical argument that it first treats non-contingent connexions as if they were contingent, and then complains that such connexions cannot be established in the manner appropriate to contingent connexions.' The second model of inference introduced above, the *sāmānyato dṛṣṭa,* gets around this difficulty by appealing to some non-contingent connections such as that between a quality and a substratum, or that between a part and the whole.

[27] H. P. Grice, pp. 469 ff.

To be sure the Sautrāntika Buddhist who may be rightly called the representationalist in the Indian tradition wants to draw a *causal* inference from the representation of the object (a gross form) to the external reality which consists only of atoms, viz., colour-atoms. Since the effect cannot be there without the cause (and this is perhaps the only ground to warrant such an inference), one can infer the existence of the external atoms as those causally responsible for the *pratibhāsa* or the representation that our perceptions have. The Vaibhāṣika Buddhist however believes that we have direct grasp of the assemblage of many atoms presumably in our non-conceptual perception. But the Sautrāntika Buddhist disputes this. For him the assemblage is mentally represented to be *one* gross form even in our non-conceptual perception. (In thus reconstructing the Sautrāntika view, I have briefly followed Dharmottara and Durveka Miśra, see pp. 42–3.)

It may be argued against the Sautrāntika: If the property of being *one gross form* does not belong to the external reality which consists of many distinct atoms, then the perception in which such a form is represented would be wrong and conceptual and hence Diṅnāga's or Dharmakīrti's definition of perception would not apply to it. In reply Durveka says that the property of being gross belongs to the external reality because grossness in this context is nothing but the multiplicity of similar atoms grasped in one cognition. But the property of being *one gross form* belongs to the representation only, not to the external reality. Therefore the conception-free perception does not grasp any false property because the representation is grasped and the said property belongs there. (For the Vaibhāṣika view see Chapter 11.2.)

To put all this in proper perspective, we shall consider a representationalist position similar to that which Berkeley attributed to Locke. Let us suppose what Nyāya meant by a whole (*avayavin*) is a piece of material substance in the Lockian sense. It is commonly felt that physical qualities need a substratum to reside in, for we cannot conceive that qualities could exist all by themselves, i.e. could subsist *sine re substante.* The material substance is therefore the substance which 'supports' (according to Locke) the primary qualities, or qualities that are outside the mind or not dependent upon the perceiver, such as extension. We can take this view to imply that a material substance, such as a tree, provides our 'anchor' as it were for mind-independent qualities. Berkeley, after attributing this view to Locke, went on to criticize it saying that such an account of substance is at best an unexplained metaphor and at worst an 'incomprehensible'

entity: 'It is evident that 'support' cannot here be taken in its usual or literal sense, as when we say that pillars support a building: in what sense therefore must it be taken?'[28]

J. L. Mackie has called this argument 'a logico-linguistic argument' to defend the notion of a substance. According to Mackie, this argument simply exploits such ordinary locutions as 'the cat *has* surface properties'. In other words, the 'have' style of speaking presupposes a 'substratum-quality' ontology, which, says Mackie, we would do better to resist: 'If ordinary style of speaking did commit us to this conclusion, we could only say, so much the worse for our ordinary style of speaking; there is no need to let it be authoritative in leading to so unaccountable a result.'[29] This condemnation of the ordinary style of speaking is, however, strengthened and supported by the further point that our 'have' statement can easily be 'interpreted' (reparsed) in a way that would not commit us to the 'substratum' theory. 'This cat has property *X*' may say either that *X* is a member of the cluster of properties we call 'this cat' or that *X* co-occurs with the cluster which we call 'this cat'.

The above may be an effective way of defending the Lockian notion of substance against Berkeley's trenchant criticism. But the 'support' doctrine of a substance, to which Locke might or might not have subscribed, cannot be so easily brushed aside, as has been done by Mackie, by ridiculing it as only an 'ordinary style of speaking'. Berkeley, to be sure, assumed that Locke was committed to a disastrous doctrine of material substances, which is 'the most abstract and incomprehensible of all other'. Mackie therefore tries to defend Locke by showing that the idea of an imperceptible and hence unknowable substratum is what a modern Lockian could dispense with and resort to the notion of 'real essences' of things, which scientists today talk about in their talk of the molecular and atomic structures of things. But this does not imply that the above so-called logico-linguistic argument in favour of a 'substratum' theory is entirely to be discredited. For the argument in favour of a 'substratum' theory does not derive its force simply from the idiom of ordinary language.

Our ordinary style of speaking '*a* has *X*' reflects a material mode which cannot be fully assimilated either by a 'constituent' relationship to a cluster or by a co-occurrence relation with a cluster. The 'have' style of speaking spells out a very generic notion of relatedness, which

[28] G. Berkeley, *Principles*, section 16.

[29] J. L. Mackie, p. 79.

can be specified for each specific occasion. In 'John has wealth' we have an ownership relation, whereas in 'This tree has leaves' we have a substratum-occurrent relation. I do not see why one should be a more 'obscure and relative' notion than the other. Wealth cannot be a constituent of John, nor can it 'co-occur' (in Mackie's sense) with John. The same holds for the leaves of the tree. Mackie has suggested that in 'This cat has *X*' we may alternatively take 'this cat' as referring to some subset of the collection of all properties of the cat, which excludes *X*, and then take the sentence to mean that *X* co-occurs with that subset. What could be more obscure than taking the very common expression 'this cat' as referring to some strange, unspecified subset in order to assimilate a genuine substratum-occurrent relationship into co-occurrence? A Naiyāyika would say that we immediately identify the objects of reference of 'this tree' and 'this cat' as the things, the wholes, which happen to be the substrata of the leaves and the property *X*. Otherwise we have to resort to the old Bundle theory of substance (inadvertently for Mackie, who prefers a 'real essence' theory of substance). I think the 'substratum' theory of substance should not, in the first place, be given up in spite of Berkeley's critique and in the second place, it is not altogether incompatible with the 'real essence' theory.

Another criticism of the 'substratum' theory (mentioned by both Berkeley and Mackie) is that it is a bad metaphor. But surely there is a mild touch of metaphoricality also in Mackie's co-occurrence relation. Whoever can deny the expressive power of metaphors in our language? Metaphorical extension of the meaning of terms has been a powerful tool in the hands of philosophers for a long time. If a metaphorical extension is shown to be either patently counter-intuitive or to have absurd consequences, we may be justified in banishing it from our philosophic explanation. But the substratum–occurrent relationship between a physical property and a physical thing (= the whole) such as a tree seems to be an allowable extension of the notion of such a genuine, intuitively grasped, relationship between a physical body attached to, or located in, another (bigger) body:

> 'This tree has leaves'
> 'This tree has a conical shape'
> 'This tree has a particular weight.'

Nor does the 'substratum' metaphor lead *inevitably* to any glaring absurdities, such as the doctrine of the imperceptible and hence

unknowable substance. For, as Nyāya argues, the substratum or the substance (= the whole = the tree), in most cases, is perceptible and perceived, and what is perceived cannot be unknowable. To concede that the substratum may be a colourless, formless entity where colours and forms may reside, is to concede already a phenomenalistic notion of substance. It was Bhartṛhari as well as his commentator, Helārāja, who repeatedly described a substance as a 'colourless'.and 'formless' entity (*nirūpaṃ dravyam*).[30] However, those who speak in favour of the inferentiality of the material substance do not regard it as formless or colourless.

Vaiśeṣika-sūtra 4.1.6 says: 'Perception of the gross material substance is due to its grossness, its being constituted by the inherence of many other material substances (parts or atoms) and its colour.'[31] The grossness of the thing is a condition for its being perceived, its colour, and its composite nature are similar conditions. I have already discussed the point about the composite nature. To be a perceived object is to have parts. Each material substance, short of being an atom, is constituted by other parts or atoms that are independent of it. But the composite substance itself cannot be independent of its constituents. This, therefore, gives the reason for regarding the composite substance as inhering in its constituents. Besides the constitution of the material substance, its having a colour is a necessary condition for its perception. It is therefore clear that for Nyāya the direct object of visual perception is the material substance itself and not simply its colour. Rather the material substance is perceived *because* it has colour, not through the perception of its colour. In other words, it is not that we first see the colour and then the coloured substance, but rather that we probably see them both at once. This, therefore, answers an important objection against Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika. Let me explain.

We see the visual form, the colour-expanse, and therefore the object of our visual perception is this colour-expanse. We can never penetrate through this colour-expanse to *see* the body, the substance, visually (for it is supposed to hide behind the colour), until and unless we indulge in our conceptual construction. The point seems to be that if colour is what is really perceived first, then it would put a 'veil' between the visual organ and the material substance and thus the latter would never be perceived. The old Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika answer is that both the colour

[30] Bhartṛhari III. i, *Dravya-samuddeśa*. [31] Kaṇāda, *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*, 4.1.6.

and the coloured thing, the qualifier and the qualified, are grasped in one sweep, though not necessarily structured as '*a* has *X*' or '*a* is *F*'. This is what is called unstructured, conception-free, pre-judgemental perception (Chapter 10). In a structured state, we may see something as a red rose and another as a white horse. In the unstructured state, however, the body has already been perceived.

In the above discussion we have made no distinction between physical parts and physical or phenomenal properties of the substance. Those who oppose the notion of a whole may regard a material substance as a collection of either its parts (or atoms) or its properties. It is, however, important to underline the distinction between parts and properties, for this may resolve part of the puzzle about the 'substratum' view of substance. Parts are generally particulars but properties are regarded as universals. Properties, therefore, are to be *particularized* in the manner of Naiyākyikas before they are supposed to seek a particular substratum for residence. It is agreed by both the phenomenalist and the Nyāya that our sensory awareness reveals the particulars. It reveals the particular part as well as the particularized property, say a colour-particular. Phenomenal properties grasped by our sense-faculties are regarded as particular locatees (*dharma*), which are locatable in substances. (See also Chapters 11 and 12.) Another distinction between parts and properties may be that parts may survive the destruction of the whole, while the thing itself may survive the change or transformation of properties. (This is at least the view of the *piṭhara-pāka-vādins* although the *pīlu-pāka-vādins* would disagree.) We can call a rose the same rose when it changes from light red to dark red. Guided by such considerations, one may distinguish between a whole and a substratum, while both can be subsumed under the ambiguous term 'material substance'. A whole is what is constituted by putting together the parts or atoms, while a thing-substratum is conceived as a substratum of suitably chosen property-particulars. If, however, parts and properties are not distinguished in this way (and the *pīlu-pāka* theory may endorse this point), then there is no need to distinguish between a whole and a substratum. The important point to remember is that the so-called properties (locatees) are regarded as particulars, such as the parts or pieces are.

The 'whole' tomato, for example, may be regarded as what is constituted by its pieces or atoms, while the 'thing' tomato is the substratum of certain (physical) property-particulars which may be changeable. The property-particular may disappear to make room for

another of the same category, but the substratum will continue to exist. There is a strong common-sense intuition in favour of such a 'substratum' doctrine, for the tomato remains the same for us as it turns from green to red. If we view matters in this way, then we should not say that the red tomato instantiates the property-universal *red*, but rather we should regard, as does Nyāya, the *thing* tomato as the substratum of a particular instance of the property red, which, in its turn, instantiates the property-universal *red*. These two notions of substratum are, however, conflated into one in Nyāya, although Nyāya would say that we can see the tomato as a 'whole' residing (inhering) in its parts or as a substance wherein certain properties reside (inhere). A distinction between the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika views should be noted: According to the former, if you change a part in a whole you have a 'new' whole (e.g. a pot), but if the particular colour changes you still have the same object. According to the latter however the change of colour gives us as much a 'new' pot as does the replacement of a tiny part!

A. J. Ayer has said that naïve realism defies scepticism by disallowing in a straightforward manner any so-called 'gap' between our evidence and conclusion in our perceptual awareness – a gap that the sceptic persuades others to accept. Nyāya realism is naïve realism in this sense that it refuses to accept any such gap. Nyāya argues that the 'gap' is mistakenly asserted to exist because of a conflation of the physical (causal) condition with some unclear psychological states and their alleged priorities. One sees the tomato, according to Nyāya, because it is coloured (and also because it is gross and a complete body made of parts, cf. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 4.1.6), and one sees the red colour too, because the colour-particular resides (inheres) in a composite substance and it has a specific nature (cf. *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 4.1.9). But the sceptical argument would have us believe that one sees the tomato *because one sees* its red colour or a red-like appearance. What is called 'argument from illusion' is cited by the sceptic to drive a wedge between the evidence and the conclusion in order to show that the gap exists. Hence the above answer of Nyāya must be supplemented by a realistic 'causal' analysis of perceptual illusion. We have already discussed the Nyāya analysis of such illusion in Chapter 6.

8.5 Nyāya against Sense-datum

The so-called 'argument from illusion' points out that it is generally felt, because of the occurrence of illusions, hallucinations, and

relativity of perceptions, that we cannot always say that we *see* a tomato. The Cartesian epistemologist finds it convenient to argue as follows. Instead of saying that I see a red tomato, I would be *on safer ground* if I said 'It looks like a red tomato to me', or 'It appears to be a red tomato to me'. There are generally three senses of 'looks' distinguished by philosophers today:[32] epistemic, comparative, and phenomenological. It is believed that if the phenomenological use of 'looks' ('It looks red and *round* to me') can be shown to be not analysable in other and more basic notions which are related to the first two uses, then we are led, from an analytic explanation of this use, to either the 'sense-datum' theory (where sense-data, the immediate objects of perception, are said to be mental objects, e.g. F. Jackson) or any rival theory that tries to avoid the problems of sense-data. The general trend of argument for sense-data is this: when something looks *F* (in this sense) to someone, we are talking about a sense-datum that is *F*.[33]

Jackson's defence of sense-data as mental objects (and the consequent representation theory of perception) gets around, it must be admitted, a number of decisive objections against the usual 'sense-datum' theory. However, there are still difficulties in this position. Hence it may or may not be an obviously unacceptable theory of perception; but it cannot be as Jackson claims, 'the correct theory'. Among other things, the Jacksonian 'sense-datum' is essentially dependent upon the acceptance of an 'immediate–mediate' distinction of perception, for sense-data are said to be the immediate objects of perception. This distinction, although it receives the required support from the 'argument from illusion', faces decisive objections, as we shall see presently. Jackson himself tries to show that some traditional ways of formulating this distinction fail. His own account of this distinction is given in terms of 'the *in virtue of* relation'. Thus he argues that we often *see* things in virtue of seeing other things, and such seeing could be called *mediate*. The 'other things' comprise the group of visual sense-data. A visual datum is always, according to him, 'a coloured shape'.[34]

I think this formulation of the purported distinction also fails. For we very often see things directly and not in virtue of seeing other things. To recapitulate our previous argument: even our perception of a 'coloured shape' is not immediate in virtue of which we (mediately) perceive other things. I do not see a red-coloured-circular-shape first

[32] R. Chisholm, pp. 43–53; A. Quinton, p. 180; and F. Jackson, pp. 30–49.
[33] F. Jackson, pp. 88 ff. [34] Ibid., pp. 6–11, 29.

to see, in virtue of it, a tomato that I see. But I see a red-coloured circular-shaped object, a tomato, first and last. Nyāya would say that Jackson or the 'sense-data' representationalist, puts the *in virtue of* relation in the wrong place. One does not see the tomato *in virtue of* seeing a coloured shape. Rather one sees the tomato *in virtue of* its having a coloured shape (see *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 4.1.9 referred to above).

Quinton has argued that we adopt 'a phenomenological attitude' to make a phenomenological use of 'looks', where we suppose 'a set of conventional, idealized conditions to obtain' even though we may know that they do not obtain. This phenomenological attitude, he says, is psychologically incompatible with the 'normal' attitude, i.e. the attitude in which we normally look at the world.[35] We cannot deny that we may take the phenomenological attitude and thereby abandon for that occasion our normal way of looking at things. The smart lawyer can force the neutral witness to describe phenomenologically just what he saw: not a real gun in the hand of the accused, but a coloured shape similar to that of a gun. But this phenomenological attitude is forced upon the occasion here by consideration of the general dictum: our first impression *may be* deceptive. However, *normally* first impressions are not deceptive, for they prove to be correct in most cases.

Another example (due to Quinton) shows that we often speak and think epistemically, not phenomenologically. I may see one end of a small tray that is in fact flat-sided and with semi-circular ends, the rest being obscured. Being asked about the shape, I immediately reply that it is, or looks, round; although there is no corresponding round patch in my visual field. When it is shown to me that I was wrong, I may try to *recall* the actual state of my sense-field a few moments ago. The 'sense-data' representationalist would like to win the point here by claiming: 'See now, that you had an immediate perception of the semi-circular shape to which you did not pay any attention.' I argue that if I was not in a phenomenological frame of mind (in Quinton's sense) a few moments ago, I would not be able *to recall* the semi-circular shape, for I did not *see* it in the first place. Of course I can *reconstruct* the situation conjecturally and with various familiar rules, and in this way (assuming that I was not being cheated by a clever magician) I can now describe what I would have seen had I been in a phenomenological frame of mind. I think the sense-data representationalist conflates this hypothetical reconstruction with an actual recollection, and then

[35] A. Quinton, p. 180.

claims that in each case we do see a coloured shape before we see anything. I think this claim is false. We can only claim that in some cases we may see a particular colour or a particular shape before we see anything else.

The above argument should not be construed to mean that an immediate–mediate distinction of perception is entirely indefensible. Nyāya (i.e. old Nyāya) talks about the distinction between a conception-free and a conception-loaded perception, between an unstructured sensory awareness and a structured perception, between a pre-verbal, pre-theoretic perception and a verbalizable one. It also makes sense psychologically to talk about an indeterminate and inchoate awareness and a proper perception, an uncertain sensory awareness and a perceptual decision or determination. However, these distinctions will not accommodate the perception of a 'coloured shape' as a primary one in virtue of which we see other things. For, Nyāya would say, if I can describe my percept as red or having a partciular shape, I am already in the domain of what Nyāya calls the conception-loaded perception, for object-identification or concept-classification has already taken place. To use the Nyāya terminology, our linguistic ability has already penetrated into it and therefore some minimal structure has been introduced. If we are able to see only a red-circular patch (not a tomato) with a phenomenological frame of mind, we would be able to verbalize it too, for a structure is already there: *x* (is) red *and x* is circular (or *x* is red-circular). If it happens to be the case that there is no tomato before me, not even a fake one, and I am only hallucinating (because I am hungry and like tomatoes very much), then of course I am not seeing a red-circular patch before me (for I am in no mood to be in a phenomenological frame of mind), but I *am seeing-a-red-tomato.* Nyāya explains the cases of hallucination in terms of revived memory, superimposition etc. which I shall discuss next.

8.6 Memory and Hallucination: jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti

How can I see a physical object such as a red tomato or a white horse when no such object is present in my visual field? The Nyāya answer to this question is amazingly simple: I do not see an actual (physical) object in this occasion but I see only a *remembered physical object.* This device is technically called 'presentation through revived memory' or *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti,* which I shall explain below. This is part of the Nyāya theory of perception which explains not only ordinary propositional perception but also perceptual illusion and hallucination.

The oddity lies in the Nyāya claim that here an unspecified sensory object is presented to the sense-faculty not directly but through a remembrance of our previous experiences of such objects. This is not how we ordinarily perceive visual objects, but then hallucinations are not ordinary cases of perception. Nyāya calls it a kind of perception based upon an out-of-the-ordinary connection made between the sense and the object. (See also Chapter 6.)

Let me explain. A visually perceived object can be described in many ways and we would believe such descriptions to be true: a white horse, a black cat, or a red tomato. We *see* a white horse, and we can also *see* a hand 'once shaken by the Queen' or a man 'married five times'.[36] But we would be reluctant to say, for example, that the hand looks to us to have been once shaken by the Queen. The reason is obvious. The purported property of having been once shaken by the Queen is not a *visual* object and hence visual awareness cannot attribute it to the object we see. The description may be correct but not *as* a description of the *perceived* object. However we may say that something *looks* to be a horse to us and hence the description, a horse or a white horse, could be a correct description of such a perceived object. Why? Is horsehood a visual property? If not, it would be equally wrong to say that this looks to me to be a horse or horse-like. For I am wrongly attributing a non-visual property, horsehood, to the object of vision, and it is wrong to include a non-visual element in the purportedly correct description of the visual object. This is part of Diṅnāga's criticism of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of perception in *Pramāṇasamuccaya* (Chapter I, verse 21).

If, however, entities such as horsehood and cathood and tomatohood are regarded as visual (observable), as is done by Nyāya, we would be right in describing the *perceived* object as a horse or a cat or a tomato. This will mean that what is sensorily given is a complex consisting of a thing (a particular) and a (particularized?) universal, horsehood. We may add also a particular white and the white universal to the said complex, if the description is a white horse. The upshot is that at least at an initial stage four elements or items are visually grasped in order to make the description (a white horse) of the perceived object a correct one. A subject must be visually aware of all the four elements at least at some initial stage. The qualification 'at least at some initial stage' is important. By this we refer to the subject's

[36] P. F. Strawson (1974), p. 67.

awareness prior to his 'concept-formation' about horsehood etc. Since the radical empiricism of Nyāya is opposed to any sort of nativism or the doctrine of innate ideas (See Chapter 10), 'concepts' or the subject's conceptions of horsehood etc. would be initially derived from the observational data. After such 'concepts' are formed, that is, such conceptions are deposited in the subject's *memory-bank*, the subject may at the minimal sensory stimulation *see* an object which would be correctly describable as a horse or a white horse. For although the attributive element (qualifier or *viśeṣaṇa*) is arguably supplied by the memory-bank, the description is not wrong as long as such a visible element is still present in the situation. This also justifies such veridical perceptual reports as 'I *see* a white horse running'.

As against this Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika view, Diṅnāga argued as follows. In perception each faculty grasps its own peculiar object, a particular, and hence cannot connect itself (*yojanā*) with the kind or the shared feature or the attributive element which qualifies that particular. From what the eyes see (a sudden flash of white) and what the ears hear (a noise) we *mentally* construct (*manobuddhi*) a judgement: 'There runs a white horse.' But this is hardly a description of the visual for part of the element, the noise, was picked out by my auditory sense-faculty. Similarly such descriptions as 'a horse' or 'a white horse' are not of the visual but such a description is actually a mind-induced combination of what is picked out by the eye, a particular coloured shape, and what is picked out by mind, the substratum or 'anchor' as well as horsehood. Diṅnāga says that our awareness of a white horse or a horse even cannot be perceptual just as our awareness of the sweet honey or the cold ice cannot be called visual. The visual faculty does not grasp sweetness or coldness nor is it proper to say that it grasps the 'anchor' (*dravya*) or the universal horsehood. For Diṅnāga, entities such as the 'anchor' or horsehood or tomatohood are products of our 'congenital' constructive faculty called *kalpanā* 'imagination' (see Chapter 10.1), our desire-induced *attitudes*.

What Nyāya has to say in reply is very intriguing. The attributive or 'qualifying' element (horsehood, tomatohood, or the 'anchor') may be picked out by the mind from the subject's *memory-bank* in the manner already described above. But such a mentally picked-out element can very well enter into our present perceptual awareness. Thus such verbal reports as 'I *see* a (white) horse (running)' would be correct provided (i) the attributive element (either horsehood or the 'anchor')

is in principle a visual item, and (ii) the attribution is made to an actually visualized object on the occasion, the particular, which stands so qualified irrespective of the subject's being aware of it or not.

The above principle of Nyāya is extended to explain various other facts about perceptual situation. It is contended by Nyāya that even such reports as 'I *see* sweet honey' or 'I *see* (visually) fragrant flowers', or 'I *see* cold ice' would be correct reports of visual perception as long as the particular, the 'nucleus' of the object-complex, is visually presented. In these cases the attributive or qualifying element, sweetness or fragrance, may not be the objects of the visual perception in the ordinary manner. But the mind picks it out from the memory-bank and this revived awareness presents it to the visual faculty; the sense and the object get connected here, though not in the normal way. In this way the resulting awareness becomes perceptual. Hence the correct report: 'I *see* the fragrant jasmine.'

The same principle explains the cases of perceptual illusion according to Nyāya. The mind takes the wrong signal from the (physical) sensory reaction and picks out a wrong 'qualifying' element from the memory-bank and this revived awareness generates next the non-veridical perceptual awareness which may be reported as: 'This is a snake' or 'I see a snake'. In such cases we wrongly attribute a 'qualifying' element to a perceived particular – an element that is not present in the external state of affairs. This is still a perceptual error according to Nyāya, for part of the sensorily perceived object-complex is picked out by the visual sense-faculty while the other part is supplied by revived memory. In fact the 'nucleus' is sensorily given in the ordinary way while the attributive elements are given in an out-of-the-ordinary way. The first is *physically* connected with the organ, while the second is *non-physically* connected via a revived memory. (This is what Nyāya explains by such terms as *upanīta-bhāna* and *jñāna-lakṣaṇā pratyāsatti.)*

The phenomenon of hallucination is explained in the same manner. If I am hallucinating the presence of a red juicy tomato on the empty plate, then this tomato must have been picked out by the mind from my memory-bank and the revived memory has presented it to the sense-faculty providing an out-of-the-ordinary connection between the sense and the object. There is however one difficulty. In all the above cases of 'extended' perception, the remembered entity, the one picked out by the mind from the memory-bank, figures always as the attributive or 'qualifying' element (*viśeṣaṇa*) in the resulting perceptual awareness. It

cannot occupy the 'nucleus' position in the perceived object-complex. (This is articulated by such Nyāya rules as 'The remembered entity *floats* as the qualifier only', *upanītaṃ viśeṣaṇatayaiva bhāsate.*) However, the hallucinatory tomato seems to be occupying the 'nucleus' position in my perception. There will thus be an infringement of the usual rule such that the resulting awareness cannot be called perception! (For unless the 'nucleus' is picked out by the sense we cannot call it perception.) In reply Nyāya says that the structure of our hallucinatory perception should be explained in a different manner. For example, the structure would be: *x* is tomato-ed, or has tomatohood; *x* is plump and juicy. Here '*x*' stands for the empty plate (or in the case of Macbeth's hallucination, empty space). The rest would be only attributive.

F. Jackson, a sense-data representationalist, has analysed visual hallucinations as immediate perceptions of the sense-data, and these data are, according to him, mental objects. The arguments for proving the existence of such mental objects need not be given here (see Jackson, 1977, pp. 50–81). However, once the mental objects are admitted, hallucinations are easily explained as cases of *seeing* mental objects – objects that are according to Jackson also coloured and shaped, even though they do not correspond to any physical thing. Nyāya would admit the existence of 'mental' objects as long as and in so far as they form part of some (transitory) mental event or other. Mental events are events caused by the combination of both physical and mental factors (Chapter 4.8). However, this point must be understood in the background of the Indian theory of the mental, where there is no uncompromising dualism between mind and body. The mental events are regarded here as simply 'internal' or private events, and it does not make a great deal of difference whether we can or cannot identify them with some physical changes in our brain-cells.

Certain mental events, remembering, knowing, desiring, etc. have a self-transcendent objective reference. This being so, Nyāya may concede the existence of some sort of intentional objects, but their existence and duration would be conditioned entirely by the relevant events themselves which 'intend' them. Hence there does not arise the problem of admitting a separate realm of reality for allowing such objects to inhabit (Chapter 12.4).

On the basis of such considerations we may say that the tomato, or any tomato which we have previously experienced and can now only remember, figures in my hallucination. Hence there is a 'causal' route

(though a remote and 'unusual' one) to be traced between the object hallucinated and the object or objects previously experienced. We have to say that it is the physical condition of the person along with his 'half-revived' memory or memories that generates the hallucination where one wrongly attributes to empty space (=*x*) the character of *being tomato-ed: x* is a tomato.

Certainly it is not unusual to talk about one's memory when one tries to explain hallucination. Strawson refers to the passage in *Eothen* where the author, Kinglake, says that he 'heard' the church-bells of his native English village, while he was travelling in the deserts of the Near East. The experience was described by Kinglake himself to be causally dependent upon the past pealings of those bells. Strawson's own comment is worth quoting:

> . . . we allow perception of 'reproductions' to count as perception of originals: I can be said to perceive, indirectly, my own brain or the past pealing of remote bells; for I can perceive directly, *under* the mentioned restrictions, such things as X-ray photographs or recordings which are themselves sensibly representative of those originals and causally derivative from them in just this respect of sensible representativeness.[37]

A philosopher who supports the Nyāya *jñānalakṣaṇā* would not find much here which he would wish to dispute.

[37] Ibid., pp. 77–82.

9

Pleasure and Pain

And pleasures banish pain

I. WATTS

9.1 Buddhist Concept of Pain-sensation

ONE of the important philsophical issues that separates realism from idealism is the question whether or not we accept a real (not a mere conventional) difference between the 'objects' of our experience and the experience itself, between what we experience and the very fact or episode of experiencing. If by 'experience' we mean being cognitively aware of something, then the problem resolves itself into the problem of distinguishing between this awareness and that which we are aware of at any given moment. Now, my (perceptual) awareness of this pen and the pen itself (or the fact that I am aware that I am writing and the fact that I am writing) are clearly distinguishable. For anybody else can be aware (perceptually) of this very pen and the fact that I am writing now, without in the relevant sense sharing the actual awareness that I have of them. My awareness is mine, yours is yours, but in one important sense this exclusiveness does not hold for that which we are aware of in the cases under consideration. The picture changes completely when we shift from (perceptual) awareness of what may be called the 'outer' objects to that of what are called the 'inner' episodes or states, such as pleasure and pain, desire or inclination, and even the awareness itself. Desire is probably less problematic than pain and pleasure. It is possible for me to have a desire for, or to desire, something without instantaneously being aware of the fact that I have such a desire. This point is arguable. But when we come to the inner episodes such as pain and pleasure (happiness), such a distinction between awareness and what we are aware of seems impossible to maintain.

Can there be *unfelt* pain, or *unsensed* pleasure? Could there be pain in me which I have not experienced? Could there be pleasure that has occurred for me, but which I have not felt? These questions are pertinent. They illuminate a controversy between Nyāya and Buddhism

over the nature of the perception of 'inner' episodes. The notion of the external world is such that any person can presumably be aware of it and it is assumed that the world would continue just as well even if people did not exist or were not aware of them. But the inner states or episodes which are part of my self cannot exist in the first place if I did not exist, and, second, cannot be *perceived* by anybody besides myself. Hence, philosophers generally have been of the opinion that there cannot be any 'unfelt pleasure' or 'unsensed pain'.

Awareness of pleasure (or pain) and pleasure itself always go together (if we do not feel the pleasure then we do not *have* it). These two are not distinguishable except through some linguistic device (verb–object) and on the analogy of our awareness of the external object. Now the question arises whether or not pleasures and pains are to be identified with, or be considered as an integral part of, the awareness itself. The Buddhist here follows the common intuition, and argues that the arising of pain-sensation or pleasure-sensation is nothing but a special form or kind of cognitive episode which we call the inner perceptual awareness. Dharmakīrti formulates the opponent's position: 'Some say: How can these items (pleasure, etc.) cognize themselves since they do not even cognize others? They are (therefore) cognizable by the same awareness related to the object of pleasure, etc.'[1]

In other words, an awareness that cognizes the object of pleasure cognizes the pleasure as well. But, Dharmakīrti replies: 'Emergent objects (*bhāvāh*) are the same or different according as their causal factors are the same or different. Hence, since pleasure etc. are born of the same causal factors as the (emergent) awareness, how can they (pleasure, etc.) be non-awareness?'

If the awareness of pleasure is not distinguishable from pleasure itself, it becomes an integral part of the same awareness. The question may arise at what point, and how, are we able to distinguish awareness from what we are aware of? From inner perceptual awareness, let us turn to sensory awareness. It is customary to distinguish between sensible qualities and sensory awareness of them. But the traditionally regarded sensibilia, colour, sound, taste, smell, and touch,[2] present

[1] Dharmakīrti, PV, verses 250–4 of the *Pratyakṣa* chapter.

[2] The use of the English word 'touch' in this context is admittedly a little peculiar. Here as well as elsewhere I have used it in the sense of one of the five (traditionally listed) sensible qualities, such as 'colour' and 'sound', which our five senses grasp respectively. The word 'touch' will therefore stand here for the 'tactile quality', i.e. it is a

various problems. Can we distinguish between, for example, our tactile sensation, or tactile awareness, from the touch itself, the sensible quality? We do not say that we touch a *touch*, but say that we touch a pencil. We may use the word 'feel' (the Buddhist uses the Sanskrit word *vedanā,* that conveniently hides the same problem), according to English stylistic convention. We say we feel pain; we say also that we feel the (smooth) touch of the table, the coolness of the ice, the roughness of the wood etc. Does the touch belong to the thing? Or should we say that the thing has the *power* to produce the relevant touch when somebody touches it?

In Locke's description, touch would be a *secondary* quality. The thing we touch possesses the power to generate touch. That, at least is how J. L. Mackie would like to see Locke understood.[3] But can there be an unsensed or *untouched* touch? If the answer is 'yes', it would then mean that this piece of wood would have the power to produce the 'rough touch' if it is ever touched, and would continue to have the power even if it is never touched by any person at anytime. This may seem all right. But could we use the same method about the inner sensations, pain, etc.? There may be unfelt pains or pleasures, by which we may mean that there are *powers* there to generate them. But where are these powers to be located? Ordinarily we can separate the physical concomitant of pain from the pain itself: the cut in my finger only causes the pain I feel. We do not talk here about such physical *causes* of pains or pleasures, and hence we cannot say that the said powers are in the body. Ordinarily we ascribe pain to that part of our body in which, as we say, the pain is felt. In this context however we are obliged to take pain or pleasure to be an 'inner' episode. In the absence of a better candidate, then, we have to say that such powers are located in my mind or in myself. But this becomes patently absurd. Should we say that just as the table has the power to generate the touch I feel my mind or self has likewise the power to generate the pain I feel?

The principle that we may apply to the 'external' objects may not work in the case of 'internal' states. In fact it seems quite illegitimate to extend Locke's notion of power and secondary qualities to the domain of the internal. For that would generate the kind of nonsense typified by a well-known Bengali story that I have already referred to:

name here of a particular tactile quality which can also be described as smooth or cool and so on.

[3] J. L. Mackie, pp. 14–15.

> The Doctor (to the patient): Do you have headaches in the morning?
> The Patient: No.
> The Doctor (confidently): Of course you do. Of course you do. Only you are not aware of it.

We may concede the point and say with the Buddhist that there cannot be any unsensed pain or pleasure. We may retain the notion of untouched touch along with the doctrine of power. But as we shall see, the Buddhist will not stop at this point.

What we touch is not a power but an 'actualized' *touch*, in much the same way that what we feel is an actual pain. The case of the sense-qualities seems to be different from the case of 'inner' episodes on the ground that the latter is *incurably* private while the former does not seem to be so. For anybody can touch this table and feel its touch, while nobody can be aware of the pain that I have now. But this distinction between the privacy of the 'inner' world and the 'non-privacy' of the 'outer' world does not have much force against the Buddhist. For he would ask: how do we know that you feel the *same* 'actualized' touch as do I? If each 'actualized' touch is different, then eventually the boundary between the 'outer' sensibilia and 'inner' feelings of pain or pleasure vanishes. And, similarly, the distinction between the awareness and the sensibilia will disappear.

I feel sure that there are some fatal flaws in the above argument. But that is not the main issue here. The Buddhist thinks that he starts with the strong common-sense intuition about not making any distinction between pain and the awareness of pain. But this is only the thin end of the wedge, so to speak. His full argument eventually aims at questioning the distinction between the 'inner' and the 'outer'. Nyāya, being well aware of the full size of this wedge, goes against the common-sense appeal and argues in favour of a distinction to be made between pains or pleasures and our awareness of them. The same model is valid both externally and internally. If the (external) touch is distinct from my tactile perception of it, the pain is also distinct from my inner perception of it!

9.2 *The Nyāya Distinction between Pain and Pain-sensation*

Uddyotakara in his comments on *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4 says that the word 'awareness' (*jñāna*) in the *sūtra* is used to distinguish perception (*pratyakṣa*) from pain or pleasure. A senstion must penetrate the

cognitive level in order to be regarded as a sensory (perceptual) awareness. It is part of the Nyāya psychological view that our pain or pleasure, i.e., mental episodes that can be designated either as pain or pleasure, should not be conflated with our 'perceptions', i.e. our awareness of such pain or pleasure. Pain or pleasure is not a kind of awareness, but we become aware of such pain or pleasure. Dharmakīrti challenges this view and argues, in accordance with the Buddhist Abhidharma categorization, that pain and pleasure are just types of awareness that arise in us as mental episodes.

The main argument that Dharmakīrti formulates in this connection is given in *Pramāṇavārttika (Pratyakṣa,* verse 251), which I have already translated above. The argument can be rephrased as follows. If *x* and *y* originate from causes belonging to the same class, then they belong to the same class; if they originate from causes of divergent classes, they do not belong to the same class. So how can pleasure, etc. be different from awareness, while they originate from causes belonging to the same class? It is difficult to say whether Dharmakīrti intended his argument to be understood in this way. The Naiyāyikas certainly understood it in this way. Dharmakīrti's original formulation can be read as follows: 'the distinction between (two effects) *x* and non-*x*, arises out of a similar distinction in their causal conditions. So if pleasure, etc. arise from causual conditions which are not distinguishable, how can they be distinguished from awareness?' His point was probably that the arising of pleasure, etc. shares the same set of causal conditions as does the arising of the awareness of them. So how can they be distinct or distinguished? Or he could have meant that pleasure, etc. must belong to the same class or category as awareness (they are just different types of awareness), for the similar sets of causal conditions are responsible for bringing them out or causing them.

Vācaspati, while commenting upon Uddyotakara, takes up this issue with the Buddhists. He points out at first that it cannot be the same set of causal conditions that give rise to both pleasure (or pain) and the awareness of it. This is technically called *asiddhi* 'unestablished reason', which invalidates the Buddhist argument. For example, Vācaspati says, one may have a pleasant feeling (= pleasure) along with the tactile awareness of cool sandal-paste but another person suffering from cold may have the awareness of cool sandal paste but not the same pleasant feeling which the first has. In fact, the second person would have an unpleasant feeling. Therefore the set of causal

conditions responsible for the arising of the tactile awareness is not the same one which is responsible for the arising of the pleasure.[4]

Udayana elaborates the point by saying that if pleasure belongs to the category of awareness because both are caused by the same set of conditions, then by the same token awareness could belong to the category of pleasure.[5] One may add that by parity of reasoning awareness should also belong to the category of pain. The way out of this anomaly is to say that the set of causal conditions giving rise to awareness is shared also by what gives rise to pleasure, but what is peculiar to the conditioning of pleasure is not shared by what generally gives rise to awareness. Therefore, one can say that pleasure (or pain) is a special kind of awareness, but not the other way around. The general conditions (moisture, earth, etc.) giving rise to a seedling, for example, are present when a barley seedling is generated, and this only makes the barley seedling a seedling. But since the special conditions for the barley seedling are not present whenever some seedling is generated, not all seedlings generated are barley seedlings. The Buddhists therefore may restate the position as follows: pleasure belongs to the category of awareness, for they both share some general causal conditions although the specific conditions may differ.

Vācaspati thinks that this argument is also wrong, since it is possible for two effects, *A* and *B*, to differ from each other, i.e. not to belong to the same category, even when there happens to be some agreement between them as regards certain general causal conditions. Therefore it is not necessarily the case that two effects, *A* and *B*, would belong to the same category, if only they shared some general causal conditions. The Buddhist might rephrase his thesis and say that *A* and *B* belong to the same category provided they arise from the same 'material' cause (*upādāna*). The pieces of wooden furniture belong to the same category because they are made of the same material, wood. In Buddhist parlance, however, colour, taste, smell, and touch, whatever their ontological status may be, are regarded as 'material' conditions for the arising of further colours, tastes, smells, and touches. Similarly, some previous awareness is the 'material' condition (*upādāna*) for another awareness to arise. Now it is not possible for colour, for example, to be the 'material' condition (*upādāna*) for that which is non-colour (a taste or a smell) to arise. Similarly, if awareness were the 'material'

[4] Vācaspati's view is given under NS 1.1.4, pp. 218–20 (Thakur's edn.).

[5] Udayana, p. 254 (Thakur's edn.).

condition for the arising of pleasure, pleasure should also be a kind of awareness, to be sure. For if pleasure is not a kind of awareness, then some awareness would not have given rise to it as its 'material' condition. Hence pleasure is a kind of awareness.

Vācaspati now searches for another counter-example to refute this position. First, we have to note that the expression 'material' causal condition (*upādāna*) is used metaphorically. For even awareness is regarded as the 'material' for another awareness. Second, the Buddhists believe in the theory of *samanantara pratyaya,* according to which awareness of the immediately preceding moment is regarded as the 'material' condition for the awareness of the next moment. It is conceded by the Buddhist that individual cases of awareness of different types (including the one belonging to the same class as the preceding awareness) can arise simultaneously with the preceding moment's awareness as its 'conditioning' material or a so-called material cause (as *samanantara pratyaya*). Therefore the rule that the same material will give rise to effects belonging to the same class does not always hold.

This argument of Vācaspati is admittedly weak. But he strengthens it by arguing further that it is not impossible for the effects belonging to different classes to arise from the same 'material' provided some other attending causal factors do not remain the same. For example, from the same material, seed, either a seedling or a *dead* seed could originate, if the other attending factors, temperature, moisture, etc. vary. Of course, the Buddhist could admit such a possibility, but still it does not refute his contention that pleasure would belong to the category of awareness. Udayana finds it hard to defend Vācaspati here, but he explains that Vācaspati's attempt is to make it clear (*sphuṭayitum*) that it is possible to think of a counter-example in the case under consideration (*saṃdigdha-vyāvṛttika*). In other words, even when the so-called causal 'material' is the same, it is possible to obtain two different effects, one being pleasure and the other pain, on account of the variability of the accessories.

9.3 *Udayana's Causal Argument*

Udayana tries to clarify his own view about the causal relationship as follows. If x is the 'material' for y, then y would generally belong to the category or class to which x belongs, and if y depends upon a material substance for its origination, a substance of which x is a quality, then y

belongs to the same class of qualities as *x*.[6] Therefore we can produce wooden furniture only from the same material, wood, and we can manipulate the qualities of a piece of wood (we can treat it, process it, harden it, etc.) so as to produce furniture with good qualities (or bad qualities). But beyond this the causal relationship cannot be determined in any specific terms (*ataḥ param aniyamaḥ*). Therefore it is not disputed that both awareness and pleasure (or pain) belong to the same class or category, for both are 'properties' or locatees located in what the Nyāya calls the self (*ātman*). In ordinary parlance, both would be called 'mental' episodes. But the dispute concerns the identification of a particular pleasure (or pain) with some awareness-episode or other.

The way Udayana would prefer to resolve the issue is probably like this. Suppose the required set of causal factors for producing *x* includes *A*, *B*, *C* . . . and the set for producing *y* includes, among other things, *A*. Further suppose that *A* represents the 'material' factor in both cases. This would mean that *x* and *y* belong to some higher category (class of objects) to which *A* also belongs but it is not necessary to assume that *x* and *y* should both belong to the same sub-category, say *M*, under that higher category, say *P*. For it is possible that other attending variable factors (*sahakārin*) would be responsible for the effect *x* to belong to sub-category *M* and for the effect *y* to belong to sub-category *N*, while both *M* and *N* may belong to the higher category *P*. From the same material, a piece of wood, one can produce a chair to sit upon or logs to burn. The attending factors are responsible for the difference between a chair and a pile of logs, while both would belong to the general category of wooden substances. Similarly, the 'material' (now we have to use it in a figurative sense) factor for giving rise to such awareness as seeing, touching, and remembering, as well as pleasure (or pain), may be the same. But the attending factors would intervene and they would determine whether the resulting episode would belong to the sub-category of awareness or to another category. Therefore it is possible for the originating pleasure (or pain) to belong to the higher category of *mental episodes* (by which I mean *ātmaguṇa*) without belonging to the sub-category of awareness. In this way, if we take the attending causal factors into account, we can easily explain the difference between different forms of effects that eventually arise. If I throw a ball, it is not just a simple motion which is thereby produced in the ball but a particular kind of

[6] I have tried to give a summary of Udayana's elaborate argument found under NS 1.1.4. See pp. 254–9 in Thakur's edn.

motion, and it could be a slower or faster motion depending upon how hard I wish to, and could actually, throw it. Similarly when an awareness is produced, it will not be just an awareness, but a particular kind of awareness, visual or tactile, or olfactory, depending upon other attending factors. In the same way, when pleasure arises, its intensity, its greatness, or its pettiness would also arise depending upon how the causal factors are manipulated.

The use of the expression 'material condition' (*upādāna*) in the causal analysis of mental episodes needs some explanation. Certainly a lump of clay could be the 'material' for a pot. But how can a preceding mental episode be the 'material' for the next mental episode? The English word 'material' is incurably physical but the Sanskrit word 'upādāna' is conveniently neutral in this respect. The idea is that if two items, a prominent causal factor and the effect, belong to the category of mental episodes, then the former can also be called the 'material' condition or *upādāna* for the latter!

The above is by way of giving a causal explanation of pleasure or pain in us. It still does not prove that our pleasures and pains are not just special types of awareness. Both Vācaspati and Udayana recognize this problem. Udayana says that initially we can say that the difference between pleasure (or pain) and its awareness is proven on the evidence of our experience. Certainly, pleasure or happiness does not reveal itself in the *inward* perception (*anuvyavasāya*) that experiences the object of pleasure (cool sandal-paste on a hot summer day). Someone says, 'I touch (or am aware of) cool sandal-paste'. Or he may say, 'I am happy when I feel the cool touch'. Our experience (or *inward* perception) does not in either case identify this particular instance of happiness with the awareness of the cool touch. If it did, the verbalized versions, 'I am aware of the cool touch' and 'I am happy' would have been virtually equivalent. But this is not the case. In fact such common expressions as 'I know I am happy', 'I feel happiness bursting in me', 'I was not aware of the pain because I was intent on escaping', prove that our pleasure (or pain) should be treated as distinct from our awareness of such pleasure (or pain).

It may, however, be argued that pleasure and pain constitute a special kind of awareness and that such a form of awareness could reveal itself in further awareness. Vācaspati says here that the main difference between pleasure, etc. and awareness is that while the latter always has an intentionality (refers intentionally to some object or other), the former lacks it (*artha-pravaṇa* and *tad-apravaṇa*). Besides,

Vācaspati says, the essential characteristic of pleasure or happiness consists in its being experienced (*vedanīya*) as favourable to us or being in accord with us, i.e. with our body or mind or our very existential situation (*anukūla*), and that of sorrow or pain consists in being experienced as antagonistic, hostile, unfavourable (*pratikūla*) to our existential situation. Such episodes are therefore distinct from the episodes of knowing or perceiving or apprehending. But since such episodes carry with them a built-in intensity (*tīvra-saṃvegitayā*), they are always revealed in our mental perception or inner awareness (*mānasa-pratyakṣa-vedanīya*) without any sort of dependence upon our desire to perceive or know or apprehend. (See also Chapter 5.) This explains why they are always perceived as soon as they arise. To perceive or to cognize some other (external) thing, we may need an active desire (*pramitsā*). For example, I may not be able to see a distant cow although it is lying within my visual field unless I wish to see and identify it in particular. But pleasure (or pain) episodes force themselves into our awareness as soon as they arise.

Udayana elaborates this argument in his own way. He says that if episodes of happiness (or pleasure) and sorrow (or pain) constitute a special kind of awareness, a special kind of perception, then they must have some intentional reference. That is, they should refer to some intentional object. For if they do not, they would be cases of 'objectless' awareness. Such contingencies however are not to be found, nor can we prove that such contingencies arise. (An 'objectless' awareness would be a contradiction in terms for Nyāya.) If we claim that they have intentional (objective) reference i.e. there are objects to which they intentionally refer, then we have to face the question whether such objects are 'outer' or 'inner'. As far as the 'outer' object is concerned, there does not seem to be any difference between a case of perception and a perception concomitant with pleasure-feeling or happiness. Udayana cites the example of a musical performance and contrasts the experience of a music-lover with that of an indifferent saint who does not derive any particular pleasure from music (*vītarāga*). It is the same music as far as the 'outer' object is concerned. But whereas the music-lover's experience (perception) is attended with great joy (pleasure), the saint's experience (perception) is not similarly affected. We say (figuratively) that the music-lover's inner world agrees (*anukūla*) with the experience (perception) of the music while that of the saint does not.

One can ask, continues Udayana, whether this agreeability (*anukūlatva*)

is unconditional or conditional. If it is unconditional, then we have to explain why this arises only in certain cases and not in others. If it is conditional, then we must look for the relevant condition. Neither desire nor inclination can be considered to be the causal condition here for that would lead to a circular argument: agreeability depends upon the presence of inclination and inclination is present because of agreeability. Therefore we need not look for an outer object for the intentional reference of pleasure. The outer object may be its stimulant but not its intentional reference. We must then look for an 'inner' objective reference. It is the agreeable nature of the 'inner' world of the person. It is an 'inner' disposition on account of which the external object (music) becomes agreeable and therefore desirable. And this 'inner' disposition is what we call pleasure or happiness, which becomes an object of awareness, of mental perception. Udayana explains the intentionality of an episode of awareness as the fact of its being determined (and described) on the basis of the determination of an object. In other words if some object (whether existent or 'inexistent') cannot be assigned to a mental episode, it is not a cognitive episode. The inner disposition of the above kind (pain or pleasure) is 'object-less' in this sense. For we cannot describe (or determine) pleasure with reference to some 'inner' disposition. We cannot certainly call it 'the pleasure of that pleasurable disposition'. Therefore, they are non-cognitive in character.

The opponent may argue that there cannot be any pleasure- or pain-episode that would go unnoticed or unperceived. It has been repeatedly emphasized that one cannot be in pain and also unaware of such pain. Hence if a pain- or a pleasure-episode arises it is necessarily perceived by the owner (the subject). The (external) entities which naturally do not belong to the category of awareness are, however, very different sort of entities. For they may exist or arise without being ever cognized by any subject. On the basis of such consideration one may say that something that does not belong to the category of awareness, something that is in effect a 'non-awareness', cannot have such a necessary character as characterizes only an awareness-episode. An awareness-episode, the Buddhist argues, is always perceived. It invariably reveals itself (*sva-saṃvedana*). Therefore a pain- or pleasure-episode is actually an awareness, for it is, like an awareness, always perceived (as soon as it arises).

Udayana says in reply that Vācaspati has already noted the natural (i.e. characteristic) intensity of pleasure- and pain-episodes, and this

explains why such episodes are invariably perceived by the owner. Since the Buddhist believes that an awareness is necessarily perceived (it is self-perceived) as soon as it arises, he is entitled to say that such a character (of being perceived at the moment of its existence) is a necessary condition which turns a mental episode into an awareness-episode. But it may be only a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. A pleasure-episode, therefore, may share this condition and still not turn into an awareness-episode!

Udayana argues further to refute the Buddhist thesis. Let us call the said character *c*. We would say that an entity has *c* if and only if it is impossible for the entity to originate without being perceived (inwardly or outwardly). All pain-episodes (and pleasure-episodes) have *c*. The Buddhist further claims that even all awareness episodes have *c*. But Nyāya disagrees here. It may be impossible for pain- or pleasure-episodes to arise without being perceived by the owner but it is not impossible for an awareness episode to arise and pass away unnoticed and unperceived (Chapter 5). Hence strictly speaking, the analogy does not work. Besides, consider the following. I cannot see my own face (or the interior of my body). Obviously there is nothing mysterious in this and such contingencies can be explained. Similarly I cannot but (inwardly) perceive my own pain or pleasure. There should be nothing mysterious in this, for this contingency can be happily explained by using Vācaspati's notion of *intensity*. Since pains and pleasures are always intense (above the 'threshold') they are always perceived. In other words, pains and pleasures are perceived always because of such a contingency.

It is unquestionable that pleasures (or pains) and (perceptual) awareness-episodes share at least one causal factor: the connection or communication between the senses and the objects. It has been argued that this does not make them 'birds of the same feather' or members of the same category of awareness-episode. However, some Naiyāyikas do not even believe that the said sense-object communication is a necessary condition for the arising of pleasure or pain. For mere awareness of the object (external object such as a flower or somebody's sweetheart) could generate pleasure (or pain as the case may be). For example, in our dreams we do have feelings of pleasure or pain although no sense-object communication exists. In our waking experience, such communication is needed only to generate a direct experience of the object. Therefore the causal connection that one seeks to establish between such a sense-object communication and

pain-episodes or pleasure-episodes, is a false one. Vācaspati, however, does not agree with this view. He subjects this view to a trenchant criticism. Let me explain his argument.

In dreams, just as our awareness of the external object is false, our experience or awareness of pleasure or pain is also false. When I dream that my beloved is near me, it is a false awareness, the object of which is my beloved whom I had seen and touched in the past. But she is absent when I dream. It is not that I misperceive here X as Y, but that I misapprehend in a dream the same person, my beloved, as being here and now when she is in fact in some distant place. She is not here and now but appears to me in a dream to be here and now. Similarly the pleasure I derive from my dream (by apparently touching my beloved) is not real pleasure, not an actual one, but only a memory of the pleasure-experiences I have had in the past. Pleasure that does not arise here and now appears in my dream to be here and now. In a dream it is not that somebody or something else appears as my beloved as may happen in the case of a misperception where the rope appears as a snake. When I dream of my beloved my direct experience which took place in the past at a distant place, may appear as if it were happening here and now. The situation is the same with the supposed arising of pleasure or pain in our dreams. It has to be the revived memory of some past experience of pleasure (or pain). The misperception of a snake disappears completely as soon as the rope is perceived. The perception of the rope is therefore called the 'antidote' or correcting awareness (*bādhaka*). But in our dream similar antidotes are not available until and unless the entire dream is destroyed by waking. It may still be argued that if there is no real pleasure in a dream, why would a person suffering from the pangs of separation from his beloved ever wish to have a dream about her? It is commonplace to say 'Since I cannot be near you I shall dream about you, my beloved.' Udayana replies, on behalf of Vācaspati, that out of confusion and ignorance (*mohāt*), people do resort to means which are not really means to their desired end. Even monkeys suffering from the cold are seen to approach a heap of red *guñjā*, taking it to be fire. Therefore I may desire the fake pleasure in my dream but my desiring it would not make it a real one in any way.

Udayana emphasizes the fact that we do talk about enjoying pleasure and suffering from pain, and what we enjoy and what we suffer from may not be identical with the acts of enjoying and suffering. Such acts constitute experience or awareness (*anubhava*) of pleasure and pain.

Therefore such awareness causally follows the occurrence of pain or pleasure and may not always be totally concurrent with pain or pleasure.

Coming back to dream experience, one may still argue that it is undeniable that we experience pleasure and pain in dreams. The above argument to show that it is a fake or false awareness may not convince everyone. I can make, for instance, a distinction between my dream-awareness of my beloved and the experience of pleasure in my dream. Udayana elaborates the caveat. When I wake up from my dream, I see that my beloved was not by my side and this awareness is a proper *antidote* to show that my previous awareness was false. For certainly my beloved could not have disappeared into thin air the moment I woke up and my dream-image does not leave behind any actual physical sign of her presence for me to see when I wake up. But the experience of pleasure is a different case. The 'antidote' or *correcting* awareness here cannot be an awareness of the form 'This was no pleasure'. Nor can it be of the form 'There was no pleasure (in my dream)'. Since pleasures are momentary, an awareness (when I wake up) of the form 'Now there is no pleasure' could not be the proper *antidote* to make the dream-experience of pleasure disappear, for that experience has already disappeared. Therefore what is a proper *antidote* used to show that the dream experience of a stable object, such as my beloved, is false, cannot be used to show the falsity of the dream-experience of momentary objects such as pleasure and pain. Besides, dream-experiences of pleasure cause bodily modifications (or sensations) such as horripilation, tingling, tears, and sweat. Awareness of what is momentary is also momentary, but not fake or false. For otherwise by the same token awareness of anything momentary would be fake or false. Therefore our dream experience of pleasures, etc. must be real.

In reply, Udayana concedes that in the waking stage there is no immediate awareness that acts as an antidote to 'falsify' the experience of pleasure in a dream, but the pleasure-experience is derived only from such dream-objects as the beloved or sandal paste. Our awareness of these pleasurable dream-objects is 'falsified' by our waking up. If the causal factor is falsified, the effect is also thereby falsified. Suppose I see in my dream a cloudy sky with lightning flashes and it disappears completely as the dream ends. The lightning flashes are only false effects of the fake cloud seen in dream. Horripilations, tears, etc. are not effects of pleasure directly, but they are effects of the awareness of pleasure. Therefore it cannot be argued that pleasure is

independent of sense-object communication on the ground that in the dream experience of pleasure there is no such communication.

In fact the above argument does not seem to be very cogent. For how can we easily dismiss dream-pleasure as fake? Udayana thinks that there are four kinds of pleasure that usually arise in us. The first is due to habitual recreation. For example, some enjoy hunting. The second is due to pride of possession or accomplishment. For example, some derive pleasure from kissing their pet. The third is due to sensual enjoyment of fragrant flowers or beautiful girls. The fourth is due to some mental awareness or fantasizing. For example, some would derive pleasure from thinking about the celebration of the future birth of his unborn son. These are felt to be distinct types of pleasure. What is derived from the sensual enjoyment of objects cannot be the same as what arises from mere imagination. The hungry man can go on dreaming about a sumptuous dinner until and unless the prospect of an actual dinner is at hand. When the actual dinner is available, he invariably and surely goes for the actual dinner to derive pleasure from it sensually. Therefore, there are different types of pleasure. The type of pleasure that needs actual sensual contact cannot be part of our dream experience of pleasure, for in dream such a contact is absent. But the fourth type of pleasure may very well be present in our dreams.

9.4 *The Vaiśeṣika Definition of Pleasure and Pain*

The Vaiśeṣikas (in fact, Praśastapāda) have given a definition of pleasure which Vācaspati quotes with approval. According to this definition, the causal factors for the arising of pleasure can be enumerated as follows:[7]

(1) The desired object (flowers, woman, etc.) should be present.
(2) There should arise the awareness of the desired object through sense-object connection.
(3) The enjoyer's destiny should co-operate.
(4) The self and the mind should be in communication.

Of these, we can ignore the third factor for the present, for it requires a special kind of Vaiśeṣika 'theology' or 'teleology' (according to which everything good that a person enjoys must be causally connected with his destiny which is, in fact, shaped essentially by his own previous Karma or activities). The fourth factor underlines the Vaiśeṣika causal

[7] Praśastapāda, pp. 630–3, see *Nyāyakandalī*.

analysis of any 'mental' or 'inner' episode such as the arising of cognition, pleasure, pain, desire, or aversion. The mind is only an instrument, while the episodes arise and are located in the self. A necessary causal factor is the connection between such an instrument (mind) and the self, the agent. If the mind is at rest, i.e. stops being an instrument (as in a deep sleep), or is preoccupied with being an instrument for something else (as when somebody is lost in day-dreaming), then the required agent–instrument connection does not take place. The first two factors, however, impose stricter conditions on the nature of pleasure. If the desired object is not present, and we have a misperception of it, the resulting pleasure according to this view would be a false pleasure. The real pleasure, according to Vācaspati and Praśastapāda, would therefore be something that arises (as an inner event – something whose essence is agreeableness) out of the above-mentioned factors, and that in turn triggers off enjoyment in the form of awareness of it, attachment in the form of a desire to have it continuously (*aviccheda*) or again and again (*punaḥ punaḥ*), as well as a readiness to accept it. This is however a special view of pleasure. It regards dream-pleasures as *fake* pleasures – a view that somehow runs counter to our common-sense intuition. Udayana's account of the fourfold classification of pleasure, however, makes room for the so-called pleasure out of fantasies as one variety of pleasure, not a fake one.

To sum up. The main dispute here between the Nyāya and the Buddhist is whether or not pleasure-episodes and pain-episodes should be and could be distinguished from our perception (awareness) of them. The main argument that can be given in favour of the Buddhist thesis is that it is practically impossible to say that pleasure or pain has emerged without my being aware of it, for my awareness of it seems instantaneous. I may be anaesthetized against pain with modern drugs, or the yogins may anaesthetize themselves against pleasure and pain, using, as the claim goes, yogic powers or practices. Will this be a counter-example against the Buddhist? Apparently not, for it will be readily argued that what we anaesthetize against is the physical condition for pleasure and pain, not against the 'inner' episode that we call pain or pleasure. There may be certain physical conditions that are necessary conditions for pain, for certain types of pain. But they do not constitute the sufficient condition. Anaesthesia acts as an antidote to the causal efficacy of these necessary physical conditions. Nyāya thinks, on the other hand, that there are other compelling reasons for

underlining the distinction between pain and perceptual awareness of it. For one thing, each awareness has an intentionality, while pain (or pleasure) does not have it. For another, if the general model for the analysis of awareness is that it should be distinguished from the 'object' which it intentionally refers to, then our awareness of pain (pain-sensation) should also follow the same model, and the pain to which it refers intentionally should be distinguished from the awareness itself. Nyāya would demand that the same model be pursued even in the case of our awareness of (another) awareness. For once we eliminate the distinction between awareness and its object when we talk within the context of 'inner' episodes, we might also be forced to eliminate such a distinction between awareness and its so-called 'external' object, for even the so-called 'externality' may be nothing but part of the object of our awareness. Thus our awareness of the external world would in fact be reduced to our awareness of the 'inner' world, for the so-called external may simply appear as external in the 'inner' event we call awareness. Whether this fear of the Naiyāyikas is justified or not is, however, another matter which we need not enter into here.

In any case the so-called experience of pain is regarded by the Naiyāyikas as equivalent to awareness of pain or what would be called in Indian terminology 'perception' (*pratyakṣa*) of pain (or pleasure). However, such an awareness of pain (or pleasure) is to be distinguished (according to Nyāya) not only from our sensory experience (awareness) of the sensibilia but also from our awareness of such sensory awareness. For although we need not always be aware of each awareness that may arise in us, pain- (or pleasure-) awareness is actually too *intense (tīvra-saṁvegin)* to be missed. In other words, an awareness may or may not be so intense as to generate another (inner) awareness of it, and hence its occurrence may pass unnoticed; but it is a contingent character of pain or pleasure that its occurrence cannot remain 'unsensed' or unperceived. This view therefore makes room for the usually remote possibility of pain sometimes arising in us and passing away unnoticed. Such common statements as 'I was so intent on escaping that I *felt* no pain from the wound' can be easily explained in this way.

10

Imagination, Perception, and Language

One sees the blue, and not 'It is blue'.
Purportedly from *Abhidharmāgama*

10.1 Perception, Verbal Proliferation, and Concepts

THE parable of the magician and the tiger's bone has been used in the Buddhist canons to show how proliferations of conceptual and linguistic snares capture man, who in fact is himself the creator of this labyrinth of concepts in the first place. Man objectifies the concepts only to be entangled by them. The story runs as follows: A magician found a bone, and claimed that he had some occult power which would enable him to collect all the other bones that went with that particular one, and form the complete skeleton of a dead animal. When this was done, it was found to be the skeleton of a huge creature. Blinded by success, the magician said he could even restore flesh, veins, etc. to that skeleton. When this was accomplished, to the utter astonishment of the spectators, it was found to be the dead body of a ferocious tiger. Then the magician said that he could even bring the carcass back to life. In spite of grave warnings from the spectators, the proud magician exercised his final occult power and so the tiger was brought back to life. The resurrected tiger instantly devoured up the magician.

The story undoubtedly has some soteriological significance, but that is not my concern here. The philosophical point of the story strikes a familiar note that seems closer to modern philosophic discussion. Language distorts reality by proliferating false concepts and images. This is a well-known pan-Buddhist theme, and it is often woven around such notions as *prapañca*, *vikalpa*, and *kalpanā*. I shall first explain these notions, and this will lead us to deeper problems of perception, language, and meaning.

What do we mean by *prapañca?* I wish to translate it as 'verbal proliferation'. The original meaning of this word seems obscure, although it has been used by Buddhists and Vendāntins very frequently. The word is generally used in the sense of 'amplification' or 'showing by verbal elaboration'. In the early Buddhist canons the

term is sometimes used to designate the final stage of the process of sense-perception. Here is a formula for the process of sense-perception as found in the *Majjhima:*

Visual awareness arises through dependence upon the eye and the visible form (coloured shapes): the coming together of the three (eye, the visible form and awareness) is (called) 'the touch' (sensory impingement or stimulation); depending upon the 'touch' arises sensation. What one senses, one perceives; what one perceives, one understands (or discerns through intellection); what one understands, one conceptualizes (proliferates with concepts, *prapañcayati*). As one covers (the visible, the sense-given) with a proliferation of concepts, the obsessional characteristic of conceptual proliferation assails him with respect to the visible forms *(rūpa)*, which are cognizable by eye-organ and belong to the past, the future and the present.[1]

The same formula is repeated with regard to the objects of the four other sense-faculties and the inner faculty (mind). In rendering *prapañca* as verbal proliferation I am influenced by Candrakīrti, who seems to be saying that the purpose of speech (language) is to proliferate *meanings*. The significance of this term in early canons was certainly not very different, as Bhikknu Ñāṇananda has argued convincingly.[2] Verbal proliferation may also be called conceptual proliferation in this context, for, as we will see presently, these philosophers of India were working with a theory of language where the line of demarcation between words and concepts was very fine, if not practically non-existent.

Verbalization, whose essential mark is conceptualization, is often a fact with us humans, but Buddhists and like-minded philosophers make a value-judgement here, and our initial story has illustrated it nicely. The idea is not that we are supposed to be beware of occasional linguistic snares while doing philosophy; rather our entire language is a snare or a colossal maze that 'conceals' reality completely. We conceptualize the reality (the *given* = that which is grasped) by our conception-free awareness with the help of words, and then, in search of the meanings of words, we objectify concepts. But the objectivity of concepts and complexes of concepts, i.e. the meanings of words and sentences, is only a borrowed objectivity, a sort of make-believe. Moreover they originate from our desire, craving, will, and conceit. Our language, therefore, is invented for our convenience, but it soon becomes a tangled maze that deceives us at every step.

[1] *Majjhimanikāya*, I, pp. 111F (*Madhupiṇḍaka-sūtra*). [2] Ñāṇananda, pp. 1–108.

Nāgārjuna says repeatedly that the reality, the ultimate reality or 'that-ness', is beyond *prapañca*, beyond verbal proliferations. Candrakīrti glosses *prapañca* as 'speech', in the sense of 'language'. Nāgārjuna states: "Those who conceptualize (proliferate through conceptualization) the Buddha, who is imperishable and who has transcended conceptualization-through-language, will not see the Tathāgata, for they are destroyed (*hatāḥ*) by such conceptualization-through-language."[3] This obviously reminds one of the above parable. If it is also reminiscent of the Wittgensteinian pronouncement, 'Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language',[4] it cannot perhaps be helped. However, one may claim with some justification that Nāgārjuna's explicit motivation is soteriological, while Wittgenstein's motivation relates to his *philosophische Untersuchung.*

The Buddhist's scepticism about the usefulness of language ('speech') is grounded in his more pervasive scepticism about the possibility of gaining knowledge from any means other than pure sense-perception or direct awareness. This scepticism is visible even in the early Buddhist perception-formula that I have given above. For here we may see the birth of a Humean sceptic. Sense-perception or sensation, it is said here, consists in the *coming together* of the three (the eye, the visible form, and awareness), together constituting 'touch'. This sensory experience is supposed to supply the ground for (normal) perceptual awareness, which is verbalized or expressed in language through words or concepts. But at this stage, the Buddhist says, there is the inevitable intervention of intellection and the obsessional proliferation of unnecessary concepts and words. The reality becomes hidden (*saṃvṛta*) behind the cloak of words and concepts.

The Humean sceptic looks upon sensory experience in a similar way but claims that there is (in the language of A. J. Ayer) 'an unbridgeable gap' between the sensory evidence and the conclusion we reach in our normal perceptual judgement or in so-called perceptual knowledge. Hume says in his *Treatise:*

> [Our senses] . . . convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of anything beyond. . . . When the mind looks farther than what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be put to the account of the senses; and it certainly looks farther, when from a single

[3] Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, ch. 22, verse 15. Candrakīrti's comment comes under ch. 18, verse 9.

[4] L. Wittgenstein (1958), p. 109 (part I).

perception it infers a double existence and supposes the relations of resemblance and causation betwixt them.[5]

The idea of a 'continued existence' as well as 'a distinct existence' is created by what Hume called our 'vulgar supposition'. The Buddhist says that the visible form that we assume to belong to the past, the future, and the present arises as we use language and indulge in the obsessional proliferation of concepts with the help of language (*vitarka* and *prapañca*). Both Hume and the later Buddhists concluded that the notion of a continued and distinct existence never arises from the senses.

In the Buddhist canonical description of perception given above it is explicitly claimed that at the final and crucial stage of sense-perception the concepts are, as it were, invested with an objective character. This phenomenon is brought about mainly by the inherent nature of our linguistic medium. Vague and fleeting percepts become fully crystallized into stable and objectified concepts as they pass through the linguistic medium. Fleeting percepts unfairly acquire some stability due to the nature of our sensory and mental apparatus. But a more substantial stability is wrongfully bestowed upon them by language, which has a *public* character that necessitates a standardization of symbols and a pattern to their arrangement. This is roughly the Buddhist stance.

10.2 *Imagination* vis-à-vis Vikalpa

In ordinary Sanksrit, *kalpanā* or *vikalpa* means 'imagination'. It is a curious coincidence that just as the English word 'imagination' (or its German equivalent) has been used in the writings of two such outstanding Western philosophers as Hume and Kant in a philosophically technical sense different from its ordinary meaning, the Sanskrit term '*vikalpa*' or '*kalpanā*' had a comparable fate in the hands of a galaxy of Indian philosophers over the ages. P. F. Strawson, in what he calls his 'loosely ruminative and comparative-historical' essay, 'Imagination and Perception', has drawn our attention to this rather technical use of the word 'imagination' in connection with the theory of perceptual recognition in Kant as well as Hume.[6] I wish to show that the Sanskrit word '*kalpanā*' has a similar, or perhaps a more important, role to play in the classical Sanskrit philosophers' discussion of perceptual knowledge. The time-honoured distinction found in the

[5] D. Hume, *Treatise*, Bk. I, pt. IV, section II (p. 189).

[6] P. F. Strawson (1974), pp. 45–65.

entire classical literature on the Sanskrit philosophy of perception is made with the help of this word '*vikalpa*': *nir-vikalpa pratyakṣa*, 'perception without imagination' and *sa-vikalpa pratyakṣa*, 'perception with imagination'. (These two terms have been variously translated in modern writings on Indian philosophy. But I believe a literal translation could be less misleading. For the sake of perspicuity in English, however, we may use 'conception-free' and 'conception-loaded' perception.)

Strawson notes that both Hume and Kant conceived 'imagination' as 'a connecting or uniting power which operates in two dimensions'. It is the instrument of our perceptual awareness of both, kind-identity and individual-identity, concept-identity and object-identity. Thus when I recognize, i.e. perceive an object to be a strange dog moving in my garden, and after some time see it again, I have exercised 'imagination' in the apparently technical sense that both Hume and Kant attached to the term, first in identifying it as a dog (or bringing it under the concept 'dog') and then in identifying it as the *same* dog a few minutes later. This faculty of imagination is called 'a magical faculty' in the description of Hume, and 'a concealed art of the soul' in the language of Kant. It is, as Strawson puts it, 'something we shall never fully understand'. In the Indian context, a Buddhist will say that it is an obsessional tendency for proliferating concepts, and we humans possess it from beginningless time (*anādi avidyā*), which, I suggest, means that it is philosophically unaccountable. On the other hand, a Naiyāyika would say that it is a useful faculty which helps us to organize and sort out the undifferentiated 'raw' data of sense-experience.

The affinity as well as continuity between the two uses of the term 'imagination' has already been underlined by Strawson. The ordinary sense of the word is an inventive, fanciful or playful application of concepts to things, while the philosophically relevant sense stands for ordinary concept-application in perception. Without further ado I might add that *kalpanā* in ordinary Sanskrit (such as *kavi-kapanā*) means the same thing as 'imagination' in ordinary English, while the technical sense is not very far from what 'imagination' means in the writings of Hume and Kant. The verbal reports of our perceptual experience are *infused* or *soaked* with imagination in the sense of concept-application and object-identification. To use another metaphor, verbalization of sensation is necessarily *contaminated* with proliferation of concepts (according to the Buddhist). Nyāya and

others would agree with the Buddhist that the role of language necessarily involves ordinary concept-application and object-identification in perceptual judgement. But they would disagree on the crucial issue, viz. whether such verbalization or, what amounts to the same thing for them, *vikalpa* (imagination in the second sense) necessarily *contaminates* the pristine purity of primary (sensory) perception. Verbal reports may distort, yes, they will say, but not always. Verbal reports, in Nyāya, are innocent until proven guilty, while in Buddhism they are always guilty (wrong) although some of them may not mislead us.

The philosophic use of the term *vikalpa* is very pervasive. Those philosophers who believe in Buddhist ontology can regard all concept-applications coming from ordinary language to be *vikalpa*, i.e. acceptable constructs. *Vikalpas* can also stand for theoretical constructs and hypothetical alternatives. It can also mean the interpretative analysis of a presented whole, for such interpretation takes place in the background of a theory where theoretical concepts are used for the required interpretation. *Vikalpa* is also used for socially acceptable conventions or conventionally acceptable concepts. Naiyāyikas use *vikalpa* (in their distinction of *nir-vikalpa* and *sa-vikalpa*) in the sense of any thought-construction which includes even the *true* construction, i.e. the construction that, according to them, truly represents the structure of reality. In fact, by common consent classical Indian philosophers used the term *vikalpa* in their epistemological explanation for anything that, let us say, mind adds to, or recognizes in, the 'given'. It excludes only the 'given' i.e. the pure sensory datum. If this brings it closer to what Kant called 'concepts' as opposed to what he called 'intuition', then that may not be entirely misleading. However, I forbear to enter into this question here.

An account of knowledge in terms of the percept and *vikalpa* is one of the purported goals of the *pramāṇa* theory. The dispute over *vikalpa* is whether all *vikalpas* are fictional or some of them are true representations of reality. Of these, the Buddhist accepts the first position and relies upon the 'pure given' as offering the required foundation of knowledge. Concepts are convenient fictions, conventionally accepted by people for communicational and transactional purposes. Some concept-applications acquire the status of knowledge by not misleading us in our action. To quote again Dharmakīrti's example: Two persons see at different places patches of bright glittering lustre and, taking them to be gems, run to get them, but one discovers a hidden lamp while the other gets a gem. This success or

failure in the activity that follows would determine which concept-application is *approximately* knowledge and which is not. Navya-nyāya thinks that the pure object of direct perception is too inchoate and elusive. Hence we have to look to the concept-impregnated perception where the inchoate and elusive data would be more organized, definite and certain. Some concept-applications have thus the status of being privileged representations of reality and we may give an account of knowledge in terms of such concept-application.

10.3 Prelinguistic Perception: Diṅnāga

The following sentence is attributed to the Buddha and often quoted in later philosophical literature: 'One sees the blue, but one does not see, "It is blue".'[7] This is a rather free rendering of an important quotation (from the Abhidharma) which Diṅnāga referred to. Mallavādin quotes a verse from the Buddhist Āgama: 'He who says "blue" does not see the object blue'. Our adult cognitive mechanism is such that it can turn what seems to be a quite meagre input, viz. the reaction of the sense-organs to stimulants, into a much larger output. An explanation of this unique phenomenon constituted over the ages the chief business of epistemology and the philosophy of perception. Interest lies in understanding 'in what way one's theory of nature', as W. V. Quine has put it, 'transcends any available evidence'.[8] The Buddhists, as I have just noted, were suspicious of any sort of theorizing about the world that we experience. The Buddhist preoccupation with the pristine purity of the given, with the *world-as-it-is* (and this is true in spite of fascination for the term 'emptiness' in the Buddhist literature), and their distaste for any theory about it extended even to the realm of ordinary language. For our description of the world even in ordinary language necessarily involves some theorizing about it. In the case of statements of ordinary observation this theorizing is probably minimal, but we are still presented with a theory about what is given in our verbal reports, and hence it is argued that very little trust can be put even in ordinary language.

This Buddhist attitude is reflected in their philosophy of perception,

[7] The quotation runs: 'cakṣur-vijñānasamaṅgī nīlam vijānāti no tu nīlam iti/ arthe artha-saṃjñī na tv arthe dharma-saṁjñīti. See Diṅnāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, ch. I, vṛtti under verse 4b. See Hattori, pp. 88–9. According to Mallavādin, the first part of the quotation comes from *Abhidharmāgama*, and it literally means: 'the awareness in the eye-consciousness series knows blue, but not "(It is) blue".' See Mallavādin, part I pp. 61–62.

[8] W. V. Quine (1969), 'Epistemology Naturalized', pp. 69–90.

and it coincided with their epistemological worries. Language describes the world with the help of concepts that are commonly understood in a linguistic community. A name identifies the object by differentiating it from the rest. But in both cases, the Buddhist argues, the purity of the pictures, i.e. the purity of the given, is compromised. Without language, without names and concepts, we cannot talk about the sense-given. Hence they are a sort of necessary evil. Objectified concepts may create a tangle and ultimately mislead us. Hence the Buddhist recommends caution. Before we accuse the Buddhist of what may be called 'lingua-probia', let us note that there is a sense in which we can say that our ordinary language undoubtedly presupposes a theory and this often goes unnoticed because of its excessive familiarity ('our eyes are too close to see it'). If 'theories' (conceptions) of reality are not to be conflated with the actual description of the reality itself, then we may be well advised by the Buddhist to take even our 'ordinary language' intuitions with a grain of salt.

There is a strong and widespread philosophic view (not often stressed) that claims all seeing is seeing-as . . . The Buddhist in the Diṅnāga-Dharmakīrti school holds the counter-thesis: no seeing is seeing-as . . . This implies that the cases of our seeing-as . . . should not be properly called seeing, because what constitutes *seeing-truly* should be free from conceptual or imaginative construction (*kalpanā*), and our seeing-as . . . necessarily involves the intervention of a construction. Diṅnāga's definition of perception as what is free from construction may in this way be taken as almost a stipulative or prescriptive definition. The claim seems to be that the verbal report of proper perception would be strictly impossible. For in the verbal report of what we normally take to be perceptual experience we invariably construct or conceptualize, but such awareness is not, properly speaking, perceptual! For explaining philosophical reasons in favour of this stance, I will use Dharmakīrti, Santarakṣita, and Vācaspati.[9]

First, if perception is a cognitive event arising from sense and object, then being a representation of that object, it is incapable of being joined with a verbal expression, or word. For notwithstanding what Bhartṛhari has said, what is seen does not carry a word or a name on its body as its label. Our sense faculty cannot grasp a concept, or a name, or a word. If I have never seen a camel, never heard about it, or seen its

[9] For the discussion that follows, see Vācaspati (Thakur's edn.), pp. 226–34; Dharmakīrti, PV, *Pratyakṣa*, section, verses 1–54; Śāntarakṣita, verses beginning from 1212.

picture, then in my first encounter I do not certainly see IT *as a camel*, although I do see IT. For neither the concept camel nor the word 'camel' (and these are more or less two sides of the same coin, according to Bhartṛhari's notion of words and concepts) are attached to the animal I see. Since the word 'camel' and the corresponding concept are unattached to the object, neither can be part of the cognitive (perceptual) awareness – awareness that is derived from the object. In other words since awareness arises from the object, it will represent the object not the word/concept. If a sensory awareness arises from the colour (or the visual form), it will represent only that colour. It does not represent that colour accompanied by another object, say, a taste. When a particular blue is present in the visual field, I see blue, not blue plus bitter taste. Hence when I see the object *x*, I cannot say truly that I *see* a tomato without having recourse to *vikalpa* (concepts).

One may argue that if the conception-loaded perceptual awareness of a tomato cannot be called perception, because of its dealing with words or concepts, it goes against the general feeling of the perceiver. For the perceiver invariably feels such an awareness to be a perceptual experience. The Buddhist will have to account for this common feeling. He will have to show why our constructive perception is in fact a mentally constructed awareness. To wit: Independently of the unconstructed awareness (sense-perception), our constructive perception represents verbalizable concepts for it arises from the 'concept-enriched' memory-bank. It is not generated by the object present in the visual field. Only a sensory awareness is generated by such an object. A visual awareness can only grasp what is visual and what is present. Imaginative mental construction does not have such restriction. But why does a mental construction appear to us as a perceptual experience? Although it is a mental awareness it plays down or conceals its own imaginative quality and being born of a direct (perceptual) experience, it shows its experiencehood directly. As a result of this, the cognizer takes (mistakes) it to be a perceptual experience. This is the Buddhist explanation of the above-mentioned *feeling* common to all of us.

The Buddhist summarizes the above argument in the form of a 'proof', one which makes use of a *reductio ad absurdum* type of logico-rhetorical device popular among medieval logicians of India. The generally acceptable schema for a non-reductio argument (a simplified version) is as follows:

Premisses:	*X* is *P*
	Q pervades *P*
Conclusion:	*X* is *Q*

For the sake of simplicity, the meaning of '*Q* pervades *P*' can be interpreted as '*Q* applies wherever *P* applies'. In order to derive a negative conclusion of the form '*x* is not *Q*', Dharmakīrti imagined as many as eleven 'substitution' instances of the above schema, of which only two will concern us here.[10] I will give a schematic description of the two. Suppose it is known that *X* is *A*, but it is not known whether *X* is *B* or not. We can follow either of the two ways:

(1)	Premisses:	*X* is *A*	Suppose *X* is *B*
		Not-*B* pervades *A*.	The supposition is false.
	Conclusion:	*X* is not-*B*	
(2)	Premisses:	*X* is *A*	Suppose: *X* is *B*
		Not-*A* pervades B.	
	Premiss is contradicted.		The supposition is false.
	Conclusion: *X* is not-*B*		

The above would be a fair enough representation of the logico-rhetorical devices used by the medieval Indian logician, except that there was a further (strict) requirement that each time a premise of the form '*Q* pervades *P*' (which is interpreted as '*Q*, wherever *P*'[11]) is used, it must be supported by an empirical example which substantiates this relation of pervasion – an example which will supposedly satisfy both parties in the argument. In other words, the empirical character of the inference is not totally forgotten despite the deductive technique used. Now, to see how the Buddhist draws his negative conclusion that the mentally constructed awareness is not born of the effective power of the objects (and hence not a perceptual awareness), we have to substitute 'involvement with words and concepts' for *A* 'being born out of the effective power of the objects' for *B*, and 'mentally constructed awareness' for *X*. The two versions of the relation of pervasion used are in fact contra-positive of each other, although in either case we need separate empirical examples to certify that version. This is what I call the Indian (logical) way of combining an inductive inference with a deductive argument.

One may however raise doubts about the truth of the alleged 'pervasion' relation. For it is not absolutely certain that if an awareness

[10] Dharmakīrti, *Nyāyabindu*, ch. II, pp. 35–45.

arises from the effective power of the object (as certainly our sensory perception of the blue does) it can never be infected with words and concepts. The Buddhist therefore supplies a supplementary argument to the above 'proof' in order to remove such a possible doubt. To substantiate the doubt, however, we have to find a counter-example. But the Buddhist thinks that it would be impossible to find a counter-example in this case. We seem to accept almost on *a priori* grounds that an awareness arising only from the object's causal power would have no place for concepts or words. For otherwise it would lead to absurd consequences. If a perceptual awareness otherwise, can represent things that are in no way connected with the perceptual occasion, then one can be perceptually aware of anything and everything at any occasion since there would be no restriction on what the awareness could and would represent. Words and concepts, as we have seen, are not ingrained in the object that is present in the visual field on the occasion of perception.

Nyāya may reply here that although the strong consequence of the Bhartṛhari thesis – that words/concepts are ingrained upon the object we see, and hence almost all (conscious) awareness would be awareness with words – can be rejected, there is yet another obvious way by which words and concepts will figure in our perceptions. The relation between word and object is created by convention (cf. *sāmayikaḥ* in *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra*).[11] We learn it as a member of a language community. For example, pointing to a camel somebody teaches me (*saṇketa*) that it is called 'a camel'. Hence later on when I see a camel (or a camel-like creature) I can see IT *as* a camel, or can verbalize my awareness as 'a camel' or 'it is a camel'. Therefore in this way it is possible for my (perceptual) awareness of the creature to be 'infected' by the verbalizable part 'a camel' or by the inclusion of the concept camel.

The Buddhist rejects this argument. When words get their meanings by convention in the above way, they no doubt get related to their meanings, which are not objects, but concepts or universals. Otherwise, seeing another camel-like creature, I would not be prompted to call it 'a camel'. Therefore, my perception of IT may remind me of the camel-universal which in turn may evoke from me the verbalization: 'a camel'. But the camel-universal or the camel-concept is not what can be *seen*. What is seen is the particular, the

[11] See *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* of Kaṇāda, 7.2.24.

exclusive, indivisible, whole – the particular datum. Such data are, according to Dharmakīrti, the ultimate existents (*paramārtha-sat*), but universals are not so. Therefore what is seen is not related to the verbal expression, and what is related to the verbal expression (by the convention mentioned above) is not to be *seen*. In other words, the verbal thought that we may have, after the sensory perception of IT, is not a perceptual experience, but only a verbalized conceptual thought.

There may be other absurdities if we contend that what is seen is also denoted by the word. For what we are aware of from hearing the words 'Fire is hot' is very different from what we are aware of when we *see* or perceive that fire is hot. In the latter case, fire feels hot and removes my cold instantly, but no verbal knowledge derived from the sentence 'Fire is hot' is going to work the same way. Language-meanings and inferences, therefore, deal with the universals or concepts, not the actual object. Perception deals with the actual object, the exclusive particular.

The point of the above example 'Fire is hot' seems to be obscure. Nobody imagines the perceptual awareness to be equivalent to the knowledge derived from the sentence or utterances of words. But the point is probably this. The actual object is present in the perceptual situation, whereas our knowledge of 'meaning' from the word-utterances has very little to do with the actual object. 'Meanings' that we understand from words are like *shadows* of the objects. Thus, the actual presence of the object might not occasion the utterance of such words. Therefore our awareness through word-utterances is invariably conditioned by these *shadow* entities, which markedly distinguish it from perceptual awareness. In short, word-utterance is possible even in the absence of the object but perception cannot arise when the object is not there. This suggestion comes from Udayana.[12]

The universals, the attributes, and other abstractions – all these are theoretical constructs for the Buddhist. For even ordinary language, as I have already noted, mirrors a *theory* of reality, according to the Buddhist. It does not mirror reality as such. Therefore, the ordinary distinction between a description and an interpretation does not exist for the Buddhist. The actual objects, the particulars, are real or existent as Dharmakīrti asserts, mainly because they have what may be called 'causal efficacy' (*arthakriyāsāmarthya*). Only a particular fire can cook my food or even burn it. But the concept *fire* or firehood does not

[12] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 271.

burn or do anything. The particulars are real also because they can fulfil the purpose (*artha*) of humans. This is the second sense of the cryptic term *arthakriyā*, as Udayana clearly notes.[13] The human purpose can take a million forms depending upon the object, time, place and person. Fire will serve the purpose of removing cold. A thorn pricks. And so on. But the humans cannot *do* anything with the abstractions, firehood, pitcherhood, snakeness, thornhood, etc. Therefore they are said to be unreal in the ultimate sense. In other words, their usefulness is only theoretical. They cannot themselves *force* a perceptual awareness of them on us, as a particular object can. No (perceptual) awareness, therefore, can represent them in the way a perception of fire, being forced into existence by fire, represents fire. The abstractions are therefore non-perceptual in every way. This is in brief the Buddhist position about universals. They are like theoretical constructs, useful for language and communication, shadow entities construed as meanings of words, but they are never present in the object we see. At the next stage of his argument, however, the Buddhist would tentatively admit the reality of the universals, etc. and try to show how various problems will arise even if we admit universals as real in the ultimate sense. (See Chapter 10.5.) For this we need to look into the argument of Kumārila, the Mīmāṃsaka.[14]

10.4 Immediate and Mediate Perception: Kumārila

Kumārila has argued against the Buddhist to show that there are two types of perception, immediate and mediate, and in the latter type concepts and language definitely play a role. It is true that we grasp the particular in perception. But a particular is in fact the substratum of the universal. For the universals are not necessarily fictions. According to Kumārila, each object possesses two facets, a uniqueness and a generality, a particular form as well as a general form. Our first sense-object contact leads us to grasp the object as a whole by sense-perception, the whole that is inclusive of the particular aspect as well as the general aspect. At the next moment, continues Kumārila, we have another awareness which ascertains the object qualified by a universal or some other attribute, or an action, etc. The second awareness is judgemental or propositional and at the same time infected with words. In Kumārila's scheme, we first see a thing and then see IT as

[13] Udayana, Ibid. See on *arthakriyā*, M. Nagatomi (1967–8), pp. 59 ff; also E. Mikogami (1979), pp. 79–92.

[14] Kumārila, verses in the Section on *Pratyakṣa-sūtra*, especially verses 112–18.

something, i.e. as belonging to some category. The first awareness is non-propositional, while the second is propositional. In the first we grasp the whole, and in the second we discriminate what we have grasped first, and pay attention to its structure. What Kumārila says here was accepted without much modification by early Nyāya writers such as Vācaspati. In Navya–nyāya (as represented by Gaṅgeśa) this position was radically modified, as we will see later.

The first perception for Kumārila is comparable to that of a baby, a neophyte, or a mute person. It is born of the pure object (*śuddha vastuja*). The 'pure object' is, for him, the individual or *vyakti* which is the substratum of the specific as well as the generic characters. But at the first stage of sensory awareness, neither the specific nor the generic characters are cognized, but only the pure individual is grasped. We cannot, says Kumārila, grasp its particularity or specific character, for it would involve discriminating it from others at that stage. Nor could we grasp its generality or class character, for that would involve subsuming it with other similar things in a class. Such discriminating or comparing activity is not, by definition, part of the pure sensory awareness.

There is, however, one important difference between the nature of the given according to the Buddhist and that which is current among the modern Western phenomenalists. The given, which the Buddhist would call *svalakṣaṇa,* has no structure. It is a structureless unitary whole. But a Russellian datum would probably have the structure '*x* is *Q*' or '*x* resembles *y*'. This is what Wilfrid Sellars has called the structure of 'primordial awareness' required by all abstractionists or foundationalists. Sellars, however, calls it 'The Myth of the Given' and rejects it in favour of his 'psychological monism'.[15] The Buddhist datum seems to be an undifferentiated whole, a unique datum which is only self-characterized (*svalakṣaṇa*), which can probably be represented by '*X*' or '*X* is *X*' or '*X* has *X*'. Kumārila's idea of the pure datum is however different from that of the Buddhist. It is non-unitary. It can be represented by (*X*, *Y*) or probably by (*X*, *R*, *Y*). Navya-nyāya writers would seem to agree with Kumārila in this regard, although it would be emphasized that this pre-conceptual perception is in principle indescribable in language. Some writers prefer the undifferentiated structure to be (X, Y) while others, such as Mahādeva, think that the structure should be (X, R, Y).[16]

[15] W. Sellars, p. 150.

[16] Mahādeva Punatāmakara, p. 195–6.

Kumārila admits that we are aided by memory and construction at the second stage, but that need not detract the perceptual character from that awareness. For, after all, the cognizer's eyes are still wide open, and he is looking at the very same thing. Besides, the awareness is not representing, as the Buddhist would claim, objects that are not present on the occasion. The universals or the attributes are, as far as Kumārila is concerned, already located in the object. Therefore, it is impossible not to call it a visual awareness, a case of perception. The visuality of the awareness in the second moment may be disputed because there is a time-gap. For it can be argued that the first moment of the sense-object intercourse is over when the mediate perception arises. Kumārila cites an example to refute the point. Suppose I enter a dimly lighted interior room (*garbha-gṛha*) after walking for some time in the blazing sun. I may not be clearly aware of all the furniture (tables etc.) in the room in the first instant, although it seems undeniable that the sense-object contact has already taken place. Here we first get a dim awareness and then a clearer one, but we cannot, for this reason, decide that the 'clearer' awareness is non-perceptual because it is conception-loaded (for example, I identify something as a table). Kumārila makes another concession. He says that if one were to open one's eyes for an instant and then, with eyes closed, construct a judgement such as 'That was a table' by depending only on the memory of a fleeting sensory contact, it would not be fair to call this awareness a perceptual (visual) one since by then the eyes are closed and one is solely dependent on the power of memory. During a lightning flash on a dark night one might catch the glimpse of an object, which at the next instant one may identify (on the basis of the memory of the silhouette) as a woman. But this would be an 'inferential' identification, not a perceptual one. Normally, however, Kumārila argues, such identification would be perceptual in spite of its being a construction (or being *loaded* with concepts).

The Buddhist, however, is not impressed by such arguments. He would point out that Kumārila has missed an obvious point in this otherwise flawless account. The non-constructive immediate awareness does not grasp the so-called universals or attributes discriminated or separated from the individual. For we do not have a representation of the universal and its locus, the action and the actor, the attribute and the thing qualified, and so on, in our very first sensory perceptual awareness. Even if the pair (the so-called 'two forms') out of which the proposition would be constructed is present there (as Kumārila

insists), we do not discriminate (by Kumārila's own admission) between them, and hence we do not *know* them. If we do not know them separately, how can we construct them in a propositional form? If, for example, we cannot discriminate between milk and water, we cannot even mix them consciously. The Buddhist thus concludes that the immediate perceptual awareness grasps only the simple, unitary, indivisible, and unanalysable whole, called *svalakṣaṇa,* and the mental construction coming next simply superimposes upon it the so-called structure of universals and attributes. In other words, the first awareness arising from the sense *sees* the object, the second awareness only conceptualizes.

10.5 *Percepts and Concepts: Dharmakīrti*

Dharmakīrti has said that he may allow the reality of the universals, attributes, etc. and agree that they are present in the object we see, i.e. they reside there. But this assumption, which is no doubt the common-sense assumption articulated by Kumārila, leads, according to Dharmakīrti, to insuperable difficulties, some of which we will now see. Apparently Dharmakīrti's opponent believes that by looking at an object it would be possible for us to say (i.e. articulate or verbalize our (perceptual) awareness as), 'It is a cow', 'It is white', 'It is four-legged', 'It is existent', 'It is an animal', 'It is a substance', 'It is a thing'. For the sake of simplicity, let us call all the properties and universals (which the above judgements attribute to the objects we see) the class of concepts or attributive adjunct (*upādhi*). Dharmakīrti raises several objections to the claim that a propositional awareness of this kind can be perceptual.

First, there will be the problem of relating the two so-called distinct entities, one of which is seemingly the object, the percept, while the other is the concept, the attributive adjunct, such as cowness, or animalhood or substancehood. If both of them are represented in a perceptual awareness, then it is difficult to see how these two distinct entities would be tied in the way they seem to be tied in the propositional representation of the awareness concerned. To be sure, they are connected by way of being a qualifier and the qualified. One qualifies, and the other is qualified. One characterizes, and the other is characterized. Or to use a much-discussed but rather misleading modern terminology: one is the 'predicate', and the other is the 'subject'. We may call it a qualificational tie, and in the manner of P. F.

Strawson, we may understand it as a non-relational tie.[17] Now the Buddhist argues that if the two are distinctly represented in a perceptual awareness, they cannot be 'tied' in this way. Two fingers, for example, can be represented in the same awareness, but this is not enough for us to regard the two as connected in this way. The qualificational tie is epistemic, and one expects this to be based upon some ontological connection between the two. Assumption of an ontological relation between the universal and the particular leads, according to Dharmakīrti, to the paradox of relation (better known as Bradley's paradox of relation in the West). We will discuss the problem in Chapter 12.

One may resort to a substratum–superstratum (non-relational) tie and argue that two entities can in this way be represented in our perceptual awareness. This would imply that the object which would be the substratum would have the *power* to let the attributive adjuncts reside in it. This power would 'benefit' (*upakāra*) the adjuncts directly so that they may reside in the object. To avoid infinite regress, we should not construe this power as another adjunct. For example, a pail is placed under a plum tree so that the plums may fall into it and not to the ground. The pail is the substratum and has the *power* not to let the plums fall to ground. In this way, we can say that the substratum, i.e. the object, has by its nature the power to 'benefit' a number of attributive adjuncts by letting them reside in it. Now the Buddhist argues that for the realist all these adjuncts, or at least those related by way of being higher and lower universals or concepts among themselves (such as cowness, animalhood, substancehood) would be tied to the object by a simple and single power. If this is admitted, we will run into problems. For if the real object of perception, the particular, is *perceived* to have this power so that we have a *perceptual* judgement of the form 'This (the object before me) is an animal', then, Dharmakīrti argues, all other awareness with regard to the same object such as 'This is a cow', 'This is a substance', and 'This is existent' would be redundant. For if I have 'perceived' the object along with its power to attract any one of the relevant adjuncts, I have also 'perceived' its power to attract any other relevant adjunct. In other words, there would then be no distinction between 'This is a cow' and 'This is an animal', and hence one 'perception' would suffice to give us all the other types of judgemental knowledge, viz. the object is an

[17] P. F. Strawson (1959), pp. 168–70.

existent entity or it is a substance. But nobody would admit that 'This is a cow' is equivalent to 'This is an existent entity (*sat*)'.

It is not absolutely clear what sort of absurdity Dharmakīrti is trying to point out. If it is the redundancy of all other 'perceptual' judgements regarding the same percept in the presence of one such judgement which grasps the apparent object along with its *power* (to accommodate all attributive adjuncts), it may not be a fatal argument in the final analysis. Two points deserve our notice in this connection. First, Dharmakīrti has insisted, in another connection, that when an object, a unique particular, standing by its own nature, is perceived already in its entirety, how can there be any part left out unperceived?[18] And if there is no part unperceived, the argument continues, why should we indulge in mental construction to grasp anything more? In other words, what is perceived is perceived as a whole; when we see the object (the datum) we see all of it, hence no room is left for 'perceptual' judgement or construction. The judgement that we do make, therefore, is conceptual and linguistic in nature, and our percept can form no part of it.

Second, Dharmakīrti's opponent has objectified the attributive adjuncts. The opponent thinks that the object of perception, the particular, has the *power* to accommodate all such adjuncts in itself. Thus the onus is on the opponent to show why, when the object is grasped in its entirety, some (particular) adjunct will manifest itself, while the others will not. Besides, the opponent believes that both the universal and the particular are ontologically *real* in some acceptable sense of the term, and hence he will have to face the question of relation to explain their togetherness in experience. We should note that Nyāya admits only one, single relation-universal, inherence, that is supposed to unite all the nesting universals, cowness and substancehood, as well as property-features such as white, with the particular object. This makes Dharmakīrti's criticism more pertinent than it appears at the first sight.

Dharmakīrti's own view is entirely different. He does not believe that our perception, in the strict sense of the term, can be judgemental or propositional. That is why perception has been defined as non-conceptual and non-constructional. Our judgemental awareness comes entirely from conceptual construction. Even the 'subject' of the judgement does not refer to the percept, i.e. the direct object of

[18] Dharmakīrti, PV, *Svārthānumāna,* verse 43; also verses 52–5.

perception. Unlike Western phenomenalists, the Buddhist says that all construction arises from our mental propensities and dispositions, the 'beginningless constructional memory-bank' that each person carries with himself or herself. This 'memory-bank' is also constantly replenished from experience. To be more precise, these propensities and dispositions force upon us a mental construction immediately after perception. The 'IT' in 'It is a cow', for example, does not refer to the datum of perception, but to an *image* of it which is already a universal or a construct. Therefore judgements do not combine entities from two different realms, the world of particulars (the perceiver's world), and the world of concepts (the conceiver's world). The propositional tie is explained as being between two concepts or universals. But how do we derive knowledge, as we apparently do, from such utterance as 'The lotus is blue'? Even the Buddhist would call it knowledge, for it leads to successful behaviour. Here Dharmakīrti uses Diṅnāga's *apoha* 'negation' theory to make the relevant comment.

Briefly the theory holds that a word, in order to designate an object, excludes any contrary possibilities. Therefore the term 'the lotus' excludes any contrary possibilities of being other than the lotus, and the word 'blue' excludes any non-blue possibilities. In this way the judgemental awareness which is verbalized as 'The lotus is blue' juxtaposes two exclusions with the effect that some common non-contrary possibilities are left out of the exclusion – the possibility of something being the lotus and being blue.

Generally when there are two or more (connected) elements in a sentence, each of them would specify or 'generate' an exclusion class (the class of contrary possibilities – for 'cow' take the class of non-cow possibilities) and after we have excluded from our universe of discourse all such classes one common area would be left out (as non-excluded, non-contrary possibility). The given sentence is true by virtue of such possibility. This is in general Diṅnāga's method of sentence-analysis according to his *apoha* theory.

One might pose the following question: If constructive judgement or conception-loaded awareness does not contain a representation of the real entities, how can we act accordingly or deal among ourselves with such awareness? How is it possible, for example, to act according to a constructive awareness, say 'This is a gem', and then obtain not the concepts or constructs, i.e. the constituents of that awareness, but a real gem? Dharmakīrti answers it by saying that although constructs are wrongly identified as objects, and thereby prompt us to act, our

action becomes successful (in most cases) because the constructs are nevertheless indirectly linked up with the object. Two persons see, for example in two different places, the radiance coming out of a little opening. In one case, it is the radiance of a hidden jewel, in another, that of a hidden lamp. Both rush to it thinking it to be a jewel. One is successful, but the other is not. Successful activity arises when the individual *linkage* of the construct (concept) with the object (percept) is correct.[19]

It may be noted that, if we do not talk about perceptual awareness or perceptual construction, then the above-mentioned redundancy will not arise. For juxtaposition of one pair of constructs (e.g. 'It is a cow') cannot make other juxtapositions redundant. Only in perception can we claim to have seen the object in its entirety so that the verbalized part of perception may convey everything. Besides, while the particular may not be represented in the constructive awareness, we can say that it has the power to generate the constructive awareness, and simply for this reason such an awareness may be held to be perceptual. This will no doubt explain the common-sense intuition about these judgements. For indeed we commonly take them to be perceptual in character. But such a position is not acceptable to the Buddhist. For after the particular has been visually grasped, there arises the remembering of the word/concept. Constructive awareness in this way is intervened by at least two moments through the arising of memory, etc. Since the immediate datum is in a state of flux and hence no longer there in the *third* moment (all objects in Dharmakīrti's theory are momentary) there cannot arise any further perceptual awareness of that datum.

The Nyāya may reconstruct the situation as follows. The arising of memory, etc. need not be an intervening factor that separates the first sensory awareness from the later judgement. For memory or its revival can be treated as the necessary causal factor acting in co-operation with the sense organ to generate the judgemental awareness in the second moment. What is in fact one of the causal factors cannot be treated as a negative intervening factor. But this is not acceptable to Dharmakīrti. For he thinks that the datum, the object, is momentary, and hence it becomes a past object when the so-called judgemental awareness arises. This time-lag cannot be overcome. Perception is in a strong sense an awareness of the present. If remembered (past) objects are allowed to be perceptually experienced, then a man who has

[19] Dharmakīrti, PV, *Pratyakṣa*, verse 57.

become blind would be able to *see* colour. In this way, Dharmakīrti concludes that no constructive awareness can be perceptual. Each perception is of some unique datum.

Suppose there is a never-ending scroll being gradually shown to us. One end is being unwound automatically and constantly, while the other end is continuously being wound up so that only the open section between them is exposed to our view. There is thus the picture of an ever-changing landscape, and at each moment the focus *identifies* a unique vista. If we have got this picture right, then we shall have a model for explaining Dharmakīrti's theory of perception. Perception is the focus upon the exposed section revealed while the scroll moves on. In this theory, perception captures the unique and momentary particular, which is fleeting and non-repeatable. The perception and the percept are ever fluctuating and mutually determinant.

The latter part of Dharmakīrti's theory of perception makes two strong claims: (i) no seeing-as . . . can be real seeing. Strictly speaking, no propositional awareness can be perceptual. For in a propositional awareness we discriminate at least two items and also join them in togetherness, and such activities are not functions of our senses; (ii) no verbal thoughts can represent perception, for sense perception is as private as pain-awareness, and verbal thoughts use implicitly or inarticulately a language that is public. The implication which this may have on the so-called 'private language argument' is an issue which I forbear to enter into here. Both these claims however, are challenging for not only the realist but also the modern phenomenalist, logical atomists, and representationalist. For it is one thing to concede that our perception always 'goes beyond' the evidence that occasions it; and it is a completely different thing to say that what is generally called perception is a construction and nothing more. We may also note that this leaves the status of ordinary 'observation' sentences in tact, for they can still be true or false in this way: they generate true or false awarenesses according as they cohere or do not cohere with our behaviour (*vyavahāra*, successful activity and confirmatory evidence).[20]

It may be noted that Dharmakīrti later on conceded that the object of perception is two-fold, i.e., has two forms: the 'apprehensible' (*grāhya*) and the 'determinable' (*adhyavaseya*).The first is a particular, but the second, the 'determinable' in perception is a universal, a shared feature. However, his Nyāya critics seem to ignore this point.

[20] Dharmakīrti's major arguments are noted in PV, *Pratyakṣa*, verses 123–44.

10.6 *Construction and Perception: Udayana*

Dharmakīrti apparently wished to put our pain-experience on the same level as our external sensory (perceptual) experience of blue colour. They are similar as far as their privacy or their experiential content is concerned, but this constitutes a fundamental weakness of his theory. Most Nyāya writers, Vācaspati, Udayana, Jayanta, and Bhāsarvajña, criticize Dharmakīrti on this point and reject his proposal to treat all so-called 'perceptual' judgement as non-perceptual (i.e. conceptual).

Udayana has remarked that the Buddhist in fact makes the most heroic effort to refute or suppress the most obvious: 'It is certainly established by (our common) experience that our constructive awareness (*Vikalpa*) that this is a cow is as much a sensory perceptual awareness (*sākṣāt-kāra*) as it is capable of being expressed by verbal thought.'[21]

Vardhamāna in his comment makes the point sharper.[22] The constructive awareness is both verbalizable and perceptual in character. This is experientially established, and since there is no contrary evidence, the perceived character of this awareness should be regarded as only natural (*svābhāvika*). Udayana argues that there is an unmistakable presence of the sense faculty and the sensible object as the central causal factors in the situation where the awareness arises, and hence there is no reason not to accord this propositional awareness the status of perception. (Remember the etymology of *pratyakṣa* 'perception' demands that it be connected causally with the relevant object and the corresponding sense-faculty.) It may be said that the causal connection is broken because of the intervention of the sensory awareness of the datum (a sort of seeing-of rather than a seeing-that) which necessarily arises due to the presence of the sense and the object. The sense and the object, in other words, perform their causal function to give rise only to an awareness of some unstructured whole, not to the *structured* awareness that comes later. Udayana asks in reply: what is there in the so-called 'unstructured' awareness that leads necessarily to the constructive awareness in the next moment?

This question seems to put its finger on the heart of the matter. If the (perceptual) construction is an invariable consequence of the same sequential series of which the unstructured awareness is only a part (sense-object contact, unstructured awareness, structured awareness, in this order), then the first awareness, if it arises, will not destroy the

[21] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 274.

[22] Vardhamāna, p. 581.

perceptual character of the second but rather facilitate it. For the sense–object contact is still there. As Kumārila has pointed out, we are not asked here firstly to open our eyes and then shut them and then construct. It is, however, possible with some difficulty to keep gazing at a thing without constructing or judging. In this case, there will be a series of discrete sensory awarenesses. This shows that something more is needed for construction, such as drawing from the 'memory-bank' our fund of concepts and words, collateral information, and interpretive elements. The Buddhist, it may be remembered, is hesitant to call construction perceptual on such ground. Udayana says that if there is a necessary (*niyamena*) dependence upon the sense and the object for a constructive awareness to originate, then its perceptual character would be undeniable. If the dependence is accidental or merely sequential (cf. the 'crow-and-the-palm-fruit' argument, *Kākatālīya*, which says: the crow flies and the palm-fruit falls to the ground immediately afterwards, but the two incidents are merely sequential, not causally connected in the relevant way. See Udayana) then it would be possible for a perceptual construction of the kind we are talking about to arise sometimes even without the help from the sensory apparatus.[23]

Udayana's point may be explained as follows. First, we have to note that from the Nyāya point of view a constructive (or, what I shall call 'conception-loaded') perceptual awareness need not always have a propositional form verbalized as 'This is a desk'. The verbal description of the relevant awareness may be simply 'a desk'. It does not matter for Nyāya whether the awareness contains a propositional assertion or simply a propositional object-complex, for indeed in both cases it may involve a construction, a *structured* reference. In 'This is a desk' it is articulated in the form of a propositional assertion, whereas in 'a desk' (where one can describe one's perception as a perception of 'a desk') the implied structure is: Something x that has deskhood, or x that is F. Now, in either case, there may be a causal connection between such a structured, conception-loaded, awareness and a prestructured sensory awareness. If such a causal connection exists necessarily, the resulting construction can be called a perceptual awareness, although we may be invariably aided by memory, conception, and collateral information. Memory etc. do help in generating the constructive awareness of the above kind, but they are not the only

[23] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), p. 274.

factors that help. The causal connection with a relevant sensory experience is indispensable, and such a sensory experience must happen in the immediately preceding moment. If such a causal connection existing in a non-trivial way between them is denied, the distinction between a non-perceptual construction and a so-called perceptual one (of the above kind) will vanish. In that case then one can claim that even the construction 'This is a swarm of molecules' (instead of 'This is a desk') could be perceptual, for the required collateral information is supplied by physics, and we do not need to have a sensory experience of the molecules! We cannot counter this claim saying that people do not call such constructions perceptual, for if the determining factor for such usage in ordinary language is not the aforesaid (non-trivial) causal connection with the appropriate sensory awareness, we have no other way of countering such an absurd claim: I can say that I see a swarm of molecules when in fact I see a desk.

Hence the following philosophical justification exists for our ordinary linguistic intuition. We can describe a construction as 'perceptual' only if it is causally (non-trivially) connected with an appropriate sensory experience. If such a causal connection does not exist, we can describe a construction as non-perceptual. 'This is a swarm of molecules' is a perfectly legitimate construction, but since it cannot be causally connected with a sensory experience of the elements, the molecules, it cannot be called perceptual.

We can of course construct many judgements through mental imagination (which Jayanta calls 'imagination concocted by the students in their minds' *chātramonratha-viracita*), but they would not be called perceptual.[24] In the above, however, we talk about a construction with regard to the object presented in a perceptual situation, a judgement that uses, for example, 'this' (*idantā-grāhin*). It may be argued by the Buddhist that even such a construction with 'this' as an element in it is really not perceptual but we only mistakenly think it to be so. It is a case of mistaken identity. Only our non-constructive awareness is perceptual, but the quickly following constructive awareness simply appears to be so through an unconscious association or mis-identification. For none of the elements in the construction is actually presented by the preconceptual sensation.

Udayana thinks that the 'mis-identification' theory of the Buddhist cannot be proven. Obviously we cannot perceptually establish that the

[24] Jayanta, p. 87.

perceptual character of our 'structured' awareness is merely a conditional appendage, something that is superimposed, and not its necessary (unconditional) character. Nor can we infer this fact from any other evidence. The putative argument given by the Buddhist is that all seeing is pervaded by (i.e. universally concomitant with) an essential lack of construction, and hence if lack of construction is lacking in an awareness, it cannot be a seeing or a perception. Udayana says that this is purely an *a priori* and circular argument. For the opposite can be equally claimed to hold: All seeing is pervaded by conceptual construction. We can say that the 'seeing' character of our non-constructive awareness, is a conditional appendage, a case of mistaken identity, because of its proximity to a proper perception, a perceptual judgement. It may be only a purely sensory core, non-cognitive by nature, and should not even be called 'seeing' in the proper sense of the term.[25]

If the pure sensory reaction, by which we mean only the physical and physiological changes, is what the Buddhist would call perception, then it is simply a case of a metaphorical extension of the use of the word 'perception'. But certainly this cannot be the aim of the Buddhist, for even he admits that seeing or sensing is also a case of cognizing or being aware of. A cognitive event is 'mental' (it is a *citta*) in the sense that purely physical or material change (*rūpa*) would not fully explain it. A non-cognitive sensory reaction would not deserve to be called a perception; it has to be *infected* with awareness. And if it is infected with awareness, the seed of conception has, according to Nyāya, been already sown therein.

The point may be further clarified as follows. The Buddhist, it is argued, cannot favour a notion of seeing that may be called a transparent relation, as opposed to being opaque (in the sense defined by W. V. Quine).[26] In other words, a person's seeing in the Buddhist sense is not similar to his stepping on a bug. For the same reason, one can say that seeing, as the Buddhist would have to understand it, cannot be what F. I. Dretske has called 'non-epistemic seeing'. In fact non-epistemic seeing, if Dretske is right, is another way of reaching a notion of 'pure' seeing which is free from 'all inferential, interpretive discussion or associational elements'. Hence a follower of Buddhism might welcome this notion. But Nyāya would criticize it in at least two ways: (i) The object seen (in this way of 'seeing') is a whole,

[25] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), pp. 275 f.
[26] W. V. Quine (1960), section 30.

a 'plump juicy tomato' (to use Dretske's own language). This is a consequence which the Buddhist may be reluctant to admit, for this seems to support direct realism, (ii) This way of seeing lacks the vital cognitive character (despite Dretske's apparent reluctance to concede this point) which the Buddhist must attach to his notion of seeing. In other words, seeing with *zero belief content* (as Dretske calls it) despite its attraction, would not be a useful concept for the Buddhist. Therefore if Udayana's criticism is to be sustained the Buddhist should be understood to be dealing with a notion of seeing with, perhaps, minimal belief-content, but not absolutely *zero* belief-content (in Dretske's sense).

Incidentally, we may note a further problem in the concept of non-epistemic seeing.[27] It is true that in our language we sometimes do use the verb 'to see' as a transparent relation. But if seeing is discussed in the context of knowing (as the Buddhist would like to have it), such uses should be carefully set aside. For seeing in these uses cannot mean anything more than the fact of some physiological change caused by the object in the body of the subject. Hence 'seeing a bug' in this sense is exactly similar to stepping upon a bug, as Dretske has emphasized. Dretske gives a positive characterization of the non-epistemic seeing: 'seeing a bug' means that the bug has been visually differentiated from its immediate environment by the subject. But this seems to be a doubtful characterization. For if 'visual differentiation' does not mean *cognitive* differentiation, we are back to the notion of the physiological change. Certainly when we say that the baby sees its mother, we do not simply refer to the physiological changes which the baby undergoes in seeing. We mean something more. The opaque use of 'seeing' may entail some transparent use of it. But very rarely do we think that this is all there is to 'seeing' in any primary sense. Are there really such non-epistemic seeing that is of any use?

D. W. Hamlyn has claimed that seeing involves identification.[28] According to him, if one could see *non-cognitively*, i.e. see something without identifying it, this would be a derivative use of the verb 'to see'. This position would be agreeable to Udayana's point noted above. In fact one may be reluctant to call non-epistemic seeing a proper case of seeing. In his support Dretske has claimed that 'total ignorance is not a sufficient condition for total blindness'. In reply we may say: the mere possession of a pair of eyes does not guarantee seeing. Further, if the

[27] F. I. Dretske, pp. 4–77. [28] D. W. Hamlyn, pp. 195–6.

baby has distinguished his mother from the environment, his seeing is no longer transparent. From the onlooker's point of view it might be possible to say that 'The baby sees his mother' implies 'The baby sees Mrs Jones' (where the baby's mother is known as Mrs Jones). However, from the baby's point of view it would be difficult to say that 'I see my mother' (a possible verbalization of the baby's actual seeing) implies 'I see Mrs Jones'. The baby's cognitive power to differentiate involves by the same token his intentionality.

Returning to the critique of the Buddhist theory, we may further say that the Buddhist cannot claim that the pure sensory awareness, uninfected by construction or words, is universally *felt* to be perceptual in character and hence it should be regarded as perception. For even the constructive judgement of the above kind is equally universally *felt* to be perceptual, and the Buddhist has already held that an argument based simply upon 'universal feeling' or 'intuitive feeling' is inconclusive.

What Udayana says is very significant. According to him, the Buddhist has gone too far in his attempts to 'privatize' perception, for he wishes to sever any ostensible tie between language and percepts, between percepts and concepts, but this cannot be done successfully. In fact it is neither practicable nor desirable to divorce perception from conception. This point was already made by Immanuel Kant (B75 A51). Nelson Goodman has said significantly resounding the words of Kant: 'Although conception without perception is merely *empty*, perception without conception is *blind* (totally inoperative).'[29]

Udayana's point seems to be closely related to the emphatic statement of some recent Western philosophers who wish to destroy the myth of the given. Goodman's own point however is that for him it is futile to try to have a notion of what the perceptual facts *really* are, independently of how we conceptualize them. Goodman can say to the Buddhist that if the verbal reports that we make of perceptions (and that seem right to us) are claimed to be not perceptually based, then the epistemological sceptic has gone too far, in fact to a point where even the very existence of a conception-free perception would be dubious. Udayana, however, does not deny that there could be a prelinguistic, concept-free awareness, but his intention is to show that

[29] I. Kant, p. 93. In N. Kemp Smith's translation: 'Without sensibility no object would be given to us, without understanding no object would be thought. Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.' See also N. Goodman (1978), p. 6.

unless such an awareness is in a relevant sense connected with a conceptual, word-laden awareness, as part of a whole *perceptual* process, the very rationale for accepting such a concept-free awareness would seem to vanish.

Let me pursue further Udayana's argument in the same vein.[30] The Buddhist would claim that our conception-free awareness is followed by a conceptual construction, and not the other way round. Hence we take the first to be the (causal) antecedent (cf. *upādāna*) and the second the (causal) consequence (*upādeya*). Now a characteristic of the first, i.e. perceptionhood, may be wrongly transferred to the second. The Nyāya counter-claim is this: The characteristic of the second, its alleged perceptionhood, could also be transferred to the first. In other words, we may wrongly call the first event a perception because of its proximity with the second event, a proper perception! This may not entirely be a fair claim. For how can an effect, a consequence, transfer its property or characteristic (perceptionhood) to its causal antecedent?

Udayana answers this by saying that such a reverse claim is not unfair as long as we do not talk about a *real* transfer of property from one to the other, but a mistaken one. If, on the other hand, the property (perceptionhood) is really transferred from the antecedent (the conception-free awareness) to the consequent (the constructive awareness), then it would automatically defeat the Buddhist claim that the latter is not a perception. As long as we think only of a wrong superimposition of a property upon an entity where it does not belong, it does not matter whether the antecedent is wrongly subsumed in the class where the consequent belongs or if it is the other way around. For obviously, we do not feel immediately that the conception-free awareness is perceptual. Such a feeling may arise only a couple of moments later, when the consequence has irresistibly arisen. In this manner therefore, the metaphorical transfer of property may take place either way.

Udayana puts the crux of the matter as follows: Our so-called conception-loaded awareness of the object, when I see a pot as a pot, is nothing but a perceptual awareness. The Buddhist says that it only seems to be perceptual. Udayana says that not only does it seem to be so, but it *is* so. In other words, perceptionhood is its natural (*svābhāvika*) characteristic, and since it is a perception, it should also be related to the causal capacity of the sense–object contact. Besides, it

[30] Udayana, *Pariśuddhi* (Thakur's edn.), pp. 274–6.

is also felt to be indubitable. The Buddhist would again say that it only *seems* to be indubitable. But Udayana argues that this is an incoherent claim. For if *X* only seems to be *A*, but not really so, then it is possible to find a factor, a condition (*upādhi*), in the situation under which such seeming as distinct from 'seeing' arises. But what could this condition that accounts for such 'seeming'. If my seeing of a pot as a pot only seems indubitable, but not really so, then it would be possible to discover a factor or condition that would account for such invariably false *seeming:* But, says Udayana, by analysing the place, the time as well as the object-form, we are unable to find such a factor. In other words, there is very little ground for distinguishing between the construction-free awareness as perception and the conception-loaded awareness as non-perception.

The Buddhist's reluctance to call conception-loaded awareness a case of perception is partly based also upon the claim that such awareness is never free from errors. One way of showing that it is always erroneous or mistaken is to say that it shows the unique particular as sharing a common form. I do not see simply fire, but I see it as fire. This means that firehood is the character that is shared by what I see. Hence it is to show something as sharing a character that does not belong there. But this, says Udayana, would be irreconcilable with the Buddhist claim that the unique particular is never involved in our conception-loaded awareness. For if it were not involved, how could it even appear to us (in a conception-loaded awareness) as sharing a character (firehood) which does not belong there? Another way of showing the mistaken character of the conception-loaded awareness is to say that such an awareness grasps a common (a shared) character, and such a character is devoid of any capacity to do anything. For only non-fictional objects have the capacity to do anything (*arthakriyā-sāmarthya*). Certainly the firehood which I conceptualize in this awareness cannot be used for cooking, etc. But my awareness, 'This is fire', *does* persuade me to act; and I cannot be persuaded to act unless I superimpose fire-capability, a real thing, upon the fictional object of my awareness. I therefore attribute capability where it does not belong, and hence it is not totally free from mistake or falsity.

Udayana thinks that this argument is also not sound. For what is fire-capability except the particular *real* fire itself? Hence to say that I attribute fire-capability to the object of my awareness is to say that I *identify* the object of my awareness with a body of *real* fire. For

unless I do so, I cannot be persuaded to act, and when such an action is successful, why should I call my identification a mis-identification? This is another way of saying that the *real* particular does enter into my conception-loaded awareness.

Diṅnāga's *apoha* theory ('universals as exclusion of contrary possibilities' see Chapter 12.3) may, at this stage, be used to answer Udayana. The Buddhist might say that fire-capacity is nothing but the exclusion of contrary capacities.[31] Hence it is not inconsistent for such an exclusion to be a shared property, and to be attributed to, or falsely identified with, the particular. Udayana says that we can accept such an interpretation of the shared character, fire-capacity, but in that case, it would neither be a false attribution nor a false identification as long as such exclusion is not incompatible with the particular. In other words, our conception-loaded awareness even under such interpretation is not an error. It is therefore possible for the awareness to persuade one to act as long as the awareness does not reveal disconnectedness (*asaṃsarga*), or non-identity, between the object (fire-particular) and the concept (exclusion of other capacities). In other words, since the awareness *virtually* identifies (rightly or wrongly) the so-called percept and the concept, it persuades us to act. For the same reason, Udayana would like to call such conception-loaded awareness perceptual. For certainly the awareness does not say that this is the object and that is the concept. If this *lack* of discrimination is regarded as the ground for its being mistaken, then even the conception-free awareness of fire, where such distinguishing does not take place, would have to be regarded as non-veridical! For the veridicality of awareness all that is needed is to consider the fire-possibility (in the form of the exclusion of rival possibilities) as compatible ('unopposed') to a particular fire-body. If the 'concept' is compatible with the 'object' we have to regard the perception as veridical.

Udayana rejects in this way the Buddhist view which says that our action arises from 'a determination of the attribution of the object to the non-object that appears in the conception-loaded awareness'. The above argument shows that such a claim is unsound. Moreover, one can ask: what is the 'non-object (*an-artha*)?' It can either be a fictional object or that which is different from the object grasped in a conception-free perception, i.e. the particular. In either case it cannot be attributed to the particular as we have already noted. It may be said

[31] B. K. Matilal (1982), pp. 91–111.

that the conception-loaded awareness itself apprehends this fictional object, firehood, and, although there is no real distinction between the fiction and the fictional object, between conception and the concept, the said conception-loaded awareness introduces the false distinction between what is apprehended, the concept, and the apprehension. In other words, the apprehension objectifies a non-object. Udayana says that if this claim is made by adopting the position of *vijñāna-naya,* 'idealism' (where each awareness creates the object it apprehends, and we cannot know whether there is an external, mind-independent world), then even the conception-free perception would have a similar analysis. In fact, perception of blue wrongly introduces a distinction between the percept, blue, and perception. Hence both perception (conception-free) and conception would be *mistaken* awareness as far as they objectify a non-object, but not so far as their self-awareness is concerned. In that case, it is difficult to see what philosophic gain is achieved by making any distinction between a pure perception and a conception-loaded perception. We may note that Dharmakīrti's position on perception is compatible with a sort of subjective idealism which emphasizes the essential 'inwardness' of all our experience. A move for wholesale phenomenalism is a move for idealism.

10.7 Nyāya Critique of Sākāra-jñāna *(Awareness-with-a-form)*

According to the Buddhist idealist, as I have already noted, there is no 'external' object, i.e. there is no inner–outer or external–internal dichotomy. Just as each material body has a recognizable *form* by which it is distinguishable and identifiable, each awareness, under this view, has likewise a *form* (*ākāra*) by which it is distinguishable and identifiable. This form is in each case the form of the apprehensible, i.e. what is apprehended by the awareness, and what thereby distinguishes itself from the apprehension, viz. the awareness itself. It is self-awareness which combines them. It is the inherent tendency (*anādivāsanā*) of us, humans, to *externalize* the form of the apprehensible, such as blue, and thereby falsely introduce the inner–outer dichotomy. In this view, an awareness of blue is distinguished from an awareness of yellow by such *forms* ('blue' and 'yellow') as they have. The test of truth in this view lies in the coherence of the awareness with the rest, its capability as well as success. This view is accordingly called *sākāra-vijñāna-naya,* 'awareness-with-a-form' view. (It is, however, difficult to say whether Dharmakīrti was originator of this view. Nyāya tradition ascribes it to Dharmakīrti.) In any case, Udayana says that in

this view there is not much point in regarding the conception-free perception as indubitable and the conception as not so. For, by Dharmakīrti's own admission, both cases of awareness will be indubitable as regards their self-awareness.[32]

It may be argued that this is an epistemological consideration, and the Buddhist is not concerned here with an idealistic metaphysic. An external reality may be accepted here. If such an external reality is accepted, then Udayana argues, the awareness, conceptual or otherwise, cannot have a *form* intrinsic to itself. Whatever forms (blue, yellow, firehood, etc.) it appears to have, they must belong to the external reality. The form of the apprehensible, say a shared character like firehood, flashes through a conception-loaded awareness; it cannot belong to the awareness itself, for the awareness is only a unique occurrence. The shared character then should belong elsewhere, not to the awareness. If the Buddhist says that like externality, the property of having a shared character is also what is falsely attributed to the object by the conception-loaded awareness, then Udayana comes back to his previous argument: unless the unique particular that is purportedly grasped by the conception-free awareness is also grasped by the conception-loaded awareness, there is no possibility of attributing anything to such a particular. If the conception-loaded awareness refers to a fictional object as mentioned by 'this' in 'This is fire', to which attribution would be made, then Udayana says that such an attribution would be *a fortiori* impossible. For, as he has already said, there cannot be attribution (falsely) of one fictional object to another. A false attribution must be of a (fictional) property to where it does not belong (the non-fictional), to that with which it is incompatible. But two fictions are supposed to be compatible with each other. And if they are compatible in this way, the situation would lack an essential character that a *false* attribution must have.

The Buddhist may further claim that if two cases of conception-loaded awareness (as two distinct episodes) seemingly agree as regards their forms, we call that form to be the shared character, such as firehood. Such a shared character is obviously due to a false agreement of forms belonging to awareness. On this ground the conception-loaded awareness is said to be a misrepresentation. Udayana answers that it would be impossible for us to find even such a seeming

[32] Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*, Pratyakṣa chapter, verses 9–10.

agreement, if the 'forms' of awareness are identical with the awareness itself. If two different cases of awareness arise, their two 'forms' cannot appear as non-distinct, for they have already arisen as two distinct events. One may still say that the form 'fire' may be identical with the awareness 'This is fire', but still it is attributed to the external object. And hence as ascripts or attributions vaguely expressed as 'It is fire' in both cases, the two forms may agree, although the individual cases of awareness where they belong may be different as episodes. Udayana says in reply that if the form expressed as 'fire' ('. . . is a fire') is cognized as identical with the awareness, then it is difficult to see how externality would also be attributable to it. In other words, if the intimate (identical) relation of the form (expressed as 'It is fire') with the awareness itself is known by 'self-awareness', the form, i.e. the concept firehood, cannot be externalized any more even by mistake.

The problem before the Buddhist is to make sure at first that the concept firehood is not different from, but rather an integral part of, the conception-loaded awareness, and at the same time make it possible for it to be externalized (in fact to make it seem to belong to the external). For in that way he can maintain his thesis that the conception-loaded awareness is both dubitable and corrigible, while pure perception is not so. But Udayana says that this cannot be done. For you cannot have a cake and eat it at the same time. If the concept firehood is an integral part of (identical with) the conceptual awareness, then it must be known to be so in the self-awareness of the conceptual awareness. This type of self-awareness is admitted by the Buddhist. (See Chapter 5.2.) But then the concept cannot be externalized or falsely attributed to the external. If this false attribution of the concept, firehood, is not possible, then, Udayana claims, our conception-loaded awareness, which grasps firehood even internal to it, would be as much indubitable and incorrigible as the pure perception is. The Buddhist claims that the mistake in the conceptual awareness lies in its revealing the non-existent objects such as firehood as existent. Udayana says that the truth of the conceptual awareness, in this context, would lie in the fact that it reveals the object as it is, i.e. identical with the awareness, as the Buddhist claims. Whether that object i.e. firehood exists or not is a separate question. Even if firehood is only an integral part of the awareness, and if the awareness reveals it as such, we cannot doubt the truth of the awareness. Therefore the conception-loaded awareness can be both true and born out of the capacity of the senses and objects, just as the conception-

free awareness is. Hence its perceptual character cannot be denied. In short Dharmakīrti's way out is to say that such conceptual awareness is true in so far as its self-awareness is concerned. But Udayana's counter-claim is that if such an awareness is true its perceptual character cannot be denied. For Udayana, we may note, there is no self-awareness of awareness, only another (inward perceptual) awareness of an awareness. (See Chapter 5).

10.8 *Conception-free Awareness: Gaṅgeśa*

The Buddhist's claim about the existence of a conception-free awareness, awareness of a completely 'colourless' raw datum, has been called into question. In the Navya-Nyāya school doubts were raised as regards the actual occurrence of a pre-linguistic, preconceptual, pre-construction perception – on which the entire Buddhist epistemological principle as well as much of the old Nyāya epistemology depended. We should remember that it is not the occurrence of a pure sense-perception that is being doubted, nor the physical concomitant of a sensory awareness that is in dispute here. What is in dispute is the awarenesshood of the so-called conception-free, pre-linguistic, sensation. The Buddhist, it may be recalled, wants the pure sensation to be cognitive and at the same time pre-linguistic and conception-free in character. In raising doubts about the possibility of such a cognitive event, Navya-Nyāya revived some of the old arguments of Bhartṛhari according to whom each cognitive episode is 'inter-shot' irresistibly with concept or word or what he called *śabda-bhāvanā*.[33] The plausibility of such a doubt (raised in Navya-Nyāya) seems clear when we admit, for example, that perception without conception, is mute and hence useless. The Buddhist conception of a conception-free perception has similarly to be mute and hence useless. For it is admitted by all parties alike that our speech-behaviour (*vyavahāra*), i.e. our linguistic expression of the cognitive event, arises only from the conception-loaded awareness. Even an object-identification by a proper name (cf. *nāma*) is, for the Buddhist, a conception, an imaginative addition (*yojanā*) to the pure object.

Our distinction between pure sensation and conception-loaded awareness need not be conflated with certain parallel problems of distinguishing between the immediate and the mediate, the direct and the indirect forms of perception usually current in Western philo-

[33] Bhartṛhari, ch. I, verses 123–4 and the *vṛtti* therein.

sophical writings. For obviously the dispute between the Nyāya and the Buddhist on this point has different moorings.

Can there be awareness of the so-called conception-free awareness? The Buddhist has claimed that this conception-free awareness is necessarily self-aware. (This is also why it has to be distinguished from Dretske's non-epistemic seeing; see above.) This is, further, the ground for calling the conception-free event an awareness, a cognitive event. But this argument is patently circular. The essential mark of awarenesshood is the presence of self-awareness. For just as one can question the occurrence of the awareness at that stage, one can equally question the occurrence of the self-awareness. Can this episode be recalled in memory? For admittedly the purity of the datum of such conception-free grasp is unrepeatable. But could I remember it happening? It is difficult to answer this question clearly. For we cannot remember something which has not even been identified with a name. If the minimal object-identification of the datum, the verbal association (*yojanā*) of the datum with the name, is denied in our conception-free perception, then we cannot recall it. Therefore the strictly conception-free grasp (of the Buddhist) must be compromised to some extent. It must be tinged with the minimal conception in order for it to be 'tinged with awareness'. In other words,, where the purely physical reaction, i.e. the sensation, is impregnated with a minimal conception (and potentially with a word), it becomes a 'usable' (cf. *vyavhārya*) and useful awareness.

Guided mainly by such considerations, Navya-Nyāya tries to review the matter in a different way. Roughly, Navya-Nyāya formulates two principles which explain the nature of our awareness in a somewhat clearer fashion. First, whenever an object *x* figures (or floats, or swims = *avagāhate*) in my awareness, it figures or features there as distinguished in some way or other (*kiñcit-prakāreṇa*). Second, a pre-condition for having a clear and distinct awareness of this type (we shall call this a qualificative awareness) is a further awareness of the qualifier or the distinguishing or 'attributive' element (*viśeṣaṇa*). Metaphorically speaking, when an object *x* features distinctly in our awareness, it is distinguished by a cloak that may either be put upon it by us, or that may belong there initially, and be recognized by us as such. Further it is claimed that to have such a distinguishing ('qualificative') awareness, we need to have a prior awareness of the distinguisher or the 'cloak'.[34]

[34] For Gaṅgeśa's discussion, see *Tattvacintāmaṇi*, vol. I, pp. 809–45.

Let us formulate the principles as follows:

P1: If something x is presented to my awareness, it is presented there under the cloak of a purported qualifier.

P2: To give rise to an awareness in which the object x is presented as qualified by f, a prior awareness of f is needed as one of its causal factors.

P2 simply means that in order that I may be able to characterize or qualify x by f, or attribute f to x in my awareness, I must be in possession of an awareness of f, prior to it. Unless I know what 'blue' or *being blue is*, I cannot judge something to be blue. (A similar principle seems to have been formulated in the early Vaiśeṣika-sūtra.)[35]

P1 raises an obvious problem. If I am aware of x as distinguished by a property f then f is also a part of what I am aware of. This implies that f must also *float* in my awareness as much as x does, and hence one can argue that we need a further distinguisher for qualifying f. If I am aware of a piece of gold as a piece of gold then *being gold* is also what I must be aware of. It would be absurd to claim that I do not know what *gold* is or what *being gold* is like, and yet I know this to be gold. If this claim is right, then by our P1 we must say that if I know what *being gold* is (or goldness), I should know it, i.e. be aware of it, under a further characterization. This leads to the peril of infinite regress: If x figures in my awareness by way of being gold, and being gold figures there by way of being something else, then there will be no stopping. To avoid this problem, an exception of P1 is formulated:

E1: When I know an ultimate universal, a *simple* property (a *jāti* or an *akhaṇḍa upādhi*), I may know it as such (unqualified).

Two observations are needed in this context. First, the sense of such expressions as 'purported property', 'ultimate universals', and 'simple property' may be taken to be ontologically neutral. Such properties may or may not be separately real, or existent in the mind-independent objective world. It may be that there are only chairs in this world, but no separate thing called 'chairhood'. Our talk of chairhood is restricted only to its being a recognizable distinguisher (*viśeṣaṇa*). It is significant that Nyāya does not make any distinction *in this context* between a real (objective) universal (*jāti*) and a nominal universal in so far as they play the logical role of 'simple' properties. A simple property is ultimate

[35] *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* (of Kaṇāda), 8.9.

in the sense of being a property that is (further) unanalysable (unbreakable). (See also Chapter 12.4.)

Must I *always* be aware of the ultimate universals or simple properties in their unqualified forms, i.e in their nakedness? The Nyāya answer is no. A simple property can sometimes take on a verbal guise while it floats in our awareness. This constitutes a notable exception of E1. Nyāya claims that when the simple properties, such as goldness and waterness, float as such in my awareness I cannot *directly* verbalize them with the words that denote them, that is to say, I cannot capture them with such words. I can capture them using directly such words or denote them in the verbalization of my awareness only if I put upon them some other *verbal* or *nominal* guise (i.e. a purported property qualifying the property concerned):

E2: If a simple property can be verbalized by the use of the word that denotes it, it must have been presented in my awareness under a further mode of presentation. (See for more on this, Chapter 12.4.)

This leads to my second observation. We can have, according to E1, a very direct 'communion' with such simple properties, an uncoloured, non-mediated acquaintance. The distinction between such a knowledge of the simple property and the pure sensation of the uncoloured, unpropertied, naked object is this: The former is called here 'knowledge' only in virtue of its being an integral part of a knowledge-episode, such as knowledge of x as distinguished by a qualifier f, a simple property; but the latter has to stand apart and be counted. Whether or not a purported awareness of a simple property can also stand apart and be counted (as a separate episode) is a controversial issue to which I shall now turn.

P2 is appealed to by Navya-Naiyāyikas in order to settle an intricate controversy in their traditional theory of perception and knowledge. Previously we have noted the Nyāya ambivalence about the status of a pure, pre-linguistic, conception-free sensory grasp of the object in its theory of perception. Nyāya denies knowledgehood of such episodes, and argues further that we are never 'consciously' aware that such a sensation has arisen. In other words, one is never aware that one is sensorily aware of anything in such pre-linguistic, conception-free manner. The powerful arguments of Bhartṛhari have well persuaded the Naiyāyikas to recognize the 'word-impregnated', conception-laden, nature of our awarenesses. Only in this way are our thoughts

properly formed, employed, and communicated. But the older Naiyāyikas did talk about a non-conceptual sensory grasp. In order to resolve the issue whether or not such graspings do arise in us, the Navya Naiyāyikas (Udayana, Gaṅgeśa, and others) emphasized the fact that only an inference can help us in deciding this matter. Roughly the procedure is this: if we believe in P2, then my perceptual awareness of something *x* (say a piece of metal) as qualified by *f* (being gold, or goldness) must be preceded by my awareness of *f* (what it is to be gold, or goldness). Combining P1, E1, and P2, we may then say that as long as goldness is a 'simple' according to our definition, it is possible for us to have a non-qualificative, non-mediated, perceptual awareness of goldness prior to the proper judgemental perception. The word 'perceptual' need not raise our eyebrows, for Nyāya maintains that if the individuals are perceptible, the so-called universals or simple properties residing therein may also be perceived, unless there is some stronger reason to believe them to be imperceptible. The only other difficulty in this is that universals like goldness or cowness are thought to be 'abstract' in some sense, while their locations, the individuals, are 'concrete' and hence perceptible. But this 'concrete–abstract' division will cut no ice with Nyāya, for such a distinction does not exist in this system. It will be further argued that if I can see that the chair has four legs (which is nothing but the property of four-legged-ness), I can also see that this has chairness. I will return to the problem of universals in Chapter 12. And as I have already noted, since Nyāya is not a nativist it believes in the observation-based character of our initial awareness of some universals.

We may say that we need simply a conception of *f* (goldness), in order to be able to have an awareness of *x* as qualified by *f*. This can be supported by arguments of the following kind. Unless some awareness (or conception) of fire is present in a person, he cannot infer that the hill has fire there on the basis of his seeing a body of smoke there. If I have never been aware what it is for an object to be a camel, I cannot certainly be aware, all of a sudden, of an object as being a camel. Even a colour-blind person must understand the meaning of 'green' as a compatible colour, in order to be able to comprehend what is meant by the sentence 'This is green'. In this way, only a prior conception of the qualifier as such needs to be postulated for making a qualificative awareness possible.

It may be countered that the above argument is faulty. For, even if we concede the point about the conception of the qualifier in the case

of a non-perceptual awareness, in perception such a prior stage may not be needed. For it is argued that the contact of my sense-organ with the qualifier, 'colour', would be enough to generate the awareness of the object as coloured. Gaṅgeśa, in fact, has conceded all this, if only implicitly. For him, all that we need is a notion of the qualifier *f*, somehow presented prior to our being aware of something as qualified or distinguished by *f*. In some cases such a presentation may be made possible through the revival of some memory impression. In the case of inferred knowledge, or 'verbal' (speech-generated) knowledge, such a requirement is supplied by what is technically called *sādhyaprasiddhi* (literally, a familiarity with the predicate property). I can neither infer something to be an abracadabra, nor understand the meaning (gain knowledge from the utterance) of the sentence 'it is an abracadabra', unless I am already familiar with what it is for a thing to be an abracadabra. However, cases of perception are certainly different.

An example of the following kind is considered by Gaṅgeśa. The opponent may try to get around the difficulty in a perceptual situation in this way. (I have taken the liberty of modifying the actual example considerably in order to make it more intelligible.) Suppose, a disc has just turned blue, and I am looking at it. Further suppose that it has a particular blue tint, the like of which I have never seen before. Now, for Nyāya, the qualifier can be either a universal property or a particular one; and in this case, the particular blue tint would be the relevant qualifier. (Only such a particular has to play the role of a property, i.e. it has to become universal-like, in the context of a propositional combination.) The argument continues by pointing out that I would in this case first *see* the blue tint, the particular, in conception-free awareness before I could become perceptually aware that the disc is qualified by that particular blue tint. In other words, I would have no other access to the *idea* of that blue tint (obviously it cannot be remembered, because it has never been experienced before) except to the extent my sense has now grasped it. Here, therefore, we have a possible case for a simple perceptual awareness of a 'simple' entity. The opponent may still argue that the particular blue tint, in effect, will be seen, according to our P1, *as* a blue tint; which means that it will produce a complex awareness of the particular colour-tint as being blue. I simply cannot have an awareness of the tint without seeing it as blue. The notion of being blue, an ultimate universal, would in that case be supplied by a memory-revival. But we can still say that this memory-revival, if it has occurred, is generated in such

cases (cf. *prāthamika-go-pratyakṣa*-Gaṅgeśa) by the sensory apparatus (sense-object intercourse); and since the object (the particular blue tint) is visually given, it would not be a case of remembering, but rather a case of simple perceptual awareness.[36]

A follower of Bhartṛhari may continue the debate in another way. It may be claimed that the notion of cowness, horseness or goldness may be 'congenital' to us, and this will be postulated on the basis of the pan-Indian belief in the transmigration and previous births. The notion of many 'simple' properties may be only memory from a previous birth. This is the nearest equivalent in the Indian context of the 'innate idea' theory. Unlike Western rationalists, Indian thinkers never say that there are some innate ideas in us; instead, their hypothesis is that the ideas which *seem* to be congenital (innate?) are acquired through experiences over countless previous existences. Hence, when a child first recognizes a cow as a cow, he may be aided simply by the memory-traces inherited from his previous births. This, however, cannot ultimately rule out a primary perceptual experience at some time in the past. In any case we can ignore the hypothesis of previous births in this context, and endorse the nearly conclusive argument of Gaṅgeśa that at some point there could be cases of a pure perceptual grasp of the simple properties, the qualifiers as such, which will then precede some of our qualificative perceptual knowledge of the object as qualified by such properties or features.

The argument of Gaṅgeśa here obviously implies that we do not need to postulate a non-constructive, conception-free, perceptual awareness *always* occurring at the beginning of a constructive, conception-loaded perception. This goes against the general assumption by these philosophers that a sensory awareness in unstructured form must precede all structured, conception-loaded perceptions. Gaṅgeśa's point, if I understand it correctly, is that there is no logical necessity here. Only in some cases (as in those already described) does such a preconceptual, unstructured perception become 'logically' and *causally* necessary to precede judgmental perception.

It may be emphasized again that we should distinguish the present issues from certain parallel problems concerning the distinction between the immediate and the mediate perception – problems that are usually frequently discussed in modern philosophical writings on perception. We are instead trying to outline here a general theory of

[36] Gaṅgeśa vol. I, p. 817; Vardhamāna, pp. 533–5.

cognition or awareness, following the Nyāya principles, and this I think may throw some light on the intricate problems connected with our perception, sensation, conception, and speech behaviour.

A general critique of P2 can be made as follows. If a prior awareness, in some form or other, of the qualifying entity is necessary for the arising of a cognitive awareness (a supposition, or a knowledge) of an object (the qualificand) as qualified by such a qualifier, why is it not equally necessary to have a prior awareness of the object itself, the qualificand? If the precondition of a knowledge of an object as distinguished by a (purported) property is the awareness of the purported property itself, an awareness of the object itself may likewise be deemed as another necessary precondition. The general principle of thought seems to be that it is not possible for a person to have a thought about something that it is *F* or that it is qualified by *F*-ness, unless he knows which particular individual in the world he is thinking about. If, for example, I suppose or judge or know that a particular cow is white, then it is not only needed that I should already possess an awareness or knowledge of what it is for something to be white, but also that I should have the capacity to identify such a particular. Hence if it is emphasized that a prior awareness of the colour white is needed, it may be equally emphasized that a prior awareness of a cow is also needed.[37]

This, however, is not a criticism of the Nyāya view, for, with a little twist, it can be turned into a clarification of the Nyāya position. Let us consider the verbalized version of a knowledge-episode such as

'*A* cow is dark.'

I shall not consider the more usual '*The* cow is dark'. For one thing, the Sanskrit philosophers seldom discuss such formulations. For another, this presupposes that the object *x* is identified in more than one way: (i) by being qualified by cowness, as well as (ii) by being a previously identified object in the discussion or the context. Nyāya would say that the qualifier here is not only the dark shade or the condition of being

[37] It is possible that this critique of Nyāya would be welcome from the point of view of a discussion in modern philosophy of language. Russell (1912, p. 58) has claimed that one cannot make a judgement about something unless one knows which object his judgement is about. This has been called 'Russell's Principle' by Gareth Evans. For different and wide-ranging philosophical issues connected with the principle, see G. Evans, pp. 89–120. Special attention may be paid to what Evans calls 'discriminating knowledge of the object' and 'the generality constraint'.

dark, but also cowness. Cowness is called (in this context the *dharmitāvacchedaka*) the delimiting character of the object *x* to which another qualifier, or attribute, has been attributed. We have to know both qualifiers in order to know the object *x* as qualified by them. According to the usual interpretation, the above-mentioned knowledge would be explained as that of an object *x* which is first qualified by cowness and then, being so qualified, is further qualified by a dark shade, and this dark shade, in its turn, is qualified by being a dark shade (a universal, a 'simple' property). Notice that being a dark shade is not a qualifier of *x;* rather it qualifies one of the qualifiers of *x*, and in this respect, that qualifier of *x* is also playing the role of a qualificand being qualified by another object, viz. the particular dark shade is qualified by being-a-dark-shade!

One of the implications of the above critique and rejoinder is that P1 actually leads to a theory of identification of objects through descriptions or information about them. I cannot identify an object unless I already possess some information about it. Part of this information may be perceptually given as in the case of being-a-cow when a child (according to Gaṅgeśa) first perceives a cow and identifies it as a cow. But most bits and pieces of information are gathered continuously by a subject, and retained in his possession until some later time. Another important source of information is the exercise of reason upon the existing information. A third source is speech or language through which the speaker wishes to transmit the information already in his possession (*śābdabodha*).

We must note another point in this connection. When I follow Nyāya and talk about an object that *floats in* my awareness, I do not talk about an *idea* in the mind or even what is called the 'content of consciousness'. For Nyāya, there is no such thing, no 'veil of ideas' between us and the things outside. In other words, the object is not 'mental' unless we talk about internal states or psychological events where the object floats only temporarily and then disappears, for the event lasts only for a moment. (See Chapters 4.6 and 12.3.)

The philosophical underpinnings of our P2, which Navya-Nyāya upholds, can further be brought to light by examining a rival claim or principle which would apparently require us to revise P2, and which, nevertheless, has some intuitive support:

P′: I cannot have a judgement or an awareness that something is *F*, i.e. I cannot be aware of something as being qualified by a

> qualifier, *f*, unless I have already an awareness of that something, the qualificand or the substratum, as well as the qualifier, *f*.

This is not exactly incompatible with P2, but obviously it demands more by way of precondition. Nyāya does not accept this. If the logical or causal requirement for perceptual judgement is formulated so strictly as P′ demands, then it seems (to Nyāya) to be unreasonable. We may call it the fallacy of constructionism. A judgemental awareness is exclusively viewed as a construction of elements that can be treated as its building-blocks. I believe this metaphor of building-blocks induces the idea that we must first lay hold of (grasp) all the building-blocks, the elements, before we can construct the building (i.e. the judgement). The Navya-Nyāya critique of this rather too strict a principle may now be stated.

An atomic perceptual judgement is one where there are at least two parts; one is the subject of qualification or prediction (the qualificand) (the *dharmin* or *viśeṣya*) and the other is what qualifies it (the *viśeṣaṇa*). Nyāya emphasizes that we construct here with characteristics or qualifiers as the building-blocks, but we construct, to continue the metaphor, upon the subject of characterization as representing the building-site. We need therefore a prior grasping of the qualifiers or characteristics, but we need not have a prior acquaintance with the subject or *dharmin*. For we can become acquainted with it at the same time we 'construct' the judgement. For example, we may have to obtain the prefabricated materials as building-blocks beforehand, but the building-site is required only at the time of construction. In other words, Nyāya says that a prior awareness of the qualifiers is all that is logically needed to formulate a 'qualificative' judgement. We may know the subject or the substratum or the qualificand only as qualified by the said characteristics or qualifiers as we identify such a subject or formulate the judgement concerned. To use a more familiar terminology, prior awareness of the meaning of predicate is more important than an awareness of the subject entity prior to the formulation of the atomic judgement 'This is blue' or 'blue, there'. For example, from a distance we may have a dim perceptual awareness of something blue, where no previous acquaintance with that thing is possible, or where the subject is in fact like the Lockian 'We know not what'. But we do need to have a prior notion of what 'blue' means in order that the judgement 'blue, there' could be formulated. The knowledge of the location or place signified by 'there' may simply co-arise with the

judgement, for we are grasping the *dharmin,* the subject of characterization, only with the help of the attribution of blue.

The important difference between P′ and P2 is this. Let us suppose that we are dealing with atomic judgements or atomic construction, which is a combination of some qualifier with a subject or a place where the 'quality' resides. According to P′, it seems that awareness of both the qualifier entity and the subject would be required prior to the formulation of the judgement. According to P2, however, an awareness of only the qualifier entity or the meaning of the so-called predicate expression would be required (and not of the subject or *dharmin*) prior to the judgemental awareness. The *dharmin* or the subject entity or the 'place' where the particular instance of the property resides may be known along with arising of the judgement. In other words, in the judgemental awareness, it is sufficient if we know the subject-entity simply as what the qualifier qualifies.

Sighting an object from a distance in dim light we may speculate in various ways whether it is *F, G* or *H,* where we are already acquainted with the 'meanings' of *F,* G and, H. The object sighted enters into our speculation (i.e the oscillating judgemental awareness) only as an 'it'. It is something 'we know not what', but we attempt to characterize it with one or the other known characteristics. In this way we can formulate some arguments for the plausibility of P2 and the implausibility of P′. The situation envisaged here by Nyāya seems to have a parallel in the 'name-predicable' analysis of the atomic sentence, where the name is believed to be a logically proper name or a rigid designator (i.e. it must be non-connotative), but the predicables must have a meaning, i.e. they must be significant independently of their being applied to the object named.

It may be argued, however, that in the case of a perceptual judgement of the form 'This is blue' we nevertheless have a prior, non-constructive, immediate, sensory awareness of both blue and the thing, before the given perceptual judgement is constructed. But Nyāya direct realism admits that even the pot-as-such is grasped by sensory perception, for there is the sense of sight, which is wide open, and there is also the relevant contact between the sense and the object. It is therefore possible to claim that in the 'immediate' sensory awareness there are both the colour blue and the thing, which are later construed as 'This is blue'. Some would even claim that since Nyāya accepts a real connector or relation in this case, there would be three elements presented to our visual organ: (the colour) blue, the thing, and the

connector.[38] In reply to this, Navya-Nyāya makes a distinction between what is 'logically' necessary for the perceptual judgement to arise, and what is or may be factually present prior to the arising of the said judgement. The awareness of the thing, the subject entity, may be present, but it is not logically relevant, not causally potent. Nyāya even allows that we can have judgemental i.e. conception-loaded, awareness, even in the first moment where sense and mind co-operate immediately. This may happen in the case of a habituated and recurring perception. Suppose I am used to drawing the curtains every morning and seeing a black lamp-post outside. After a while I become so used to this fact that I expect to see the black lamp-post immediately after opening the curtain (my memory presents me with the required notion of the qualifiers). Hence in the first instant I see something as a black lamp-post or see that it is a black lamp-post, without the intervention of a sensory, non-constructive, awareness of black colour, lamp-post, etc. In a recurring or continuous perception, the perceptual awareness that arises after the first moment would likewise need no prior presentation of the qualifier by a conception-free awareness. For the qualifier here would be presented by the judgemental awareness of the first moment.[39]

In sum, P2 may be in need of further examination, for only in this way would we be able to see whether it is a basic principle of our thought or awareness, as it has been claimed to be by Nyāya.

On the broader issue whether an unconceptualized awareness is possible or not, we may add the following. A certain indefiniteness surrounds our notion of awareness. We may therefore talk about 'dim awareness of a nameless presence' or 'subliminal awareness' and so on. Those who favour the possibility of an unconceptualized awareness-event are most probably trying to say something similar to what Kant said about the two capacities, sensibility and understanding: 'The understanding can intuit nothing, the sense can think nothing. Only through their union can knowledge arise.'[40] But if it is true that these two powers cannot exchange their functions, it may be plausible to

[38] There was a tension in Navya-Nyāya as regards the exact content of a so-called conception-free sensory perception.

[39] This is how some commentators would like to interpret the word *prāthamika* in Gaṅgeśa's expression '*prāthamika-go-pratyakṣam*', namely that it excludes only the continuous (*dhārāvāhika*) perception. According to them, however, it would be claimed that before each non-continuous (first) *savikalpa* perception there arises a *nirvikalpa* perception. But such a claim is debatable.

[40] I. Kant (N. Kemp Smith's translation), p. 93.

argue along the line of Udayana (who was influenced by Bhartṛhari) that the so-called sensory grasp of an infant (to the extent it is indistinguishable from the reception of the photo lens of a camera) does not even amount to awareness. For, as it is emphasized, thought, concept, or implicit language or even *manaskāra* must penetrate the sense-given to develop into an awareness event. What is called sensory experience, or *ālocana,* in this theory will refer to such an awareness-event. It is contended here that such an awareness-event cannot be totally unconceptualizable since it is, though very modestly, conception-loaded. It may lack full-blown concepts but then it is only unconceptualized in this sense, not unconceptualizable.

PART IV

WORLD-VIEWS



11
Particulars

Our ontology comprises objective particulars.
P. F. STRAWSON

11.1 *Three Rival Ontologies*

We shall talk about three rival ontologies in the Indian context. The Buddhist envisions a world populated by phenomenal particulars. These are called the *svalakṣaṇas*, 'self-characterized'. They are self-sustaining, structureless units. They include both physical phenomena such as colour-patches and mental phenomena, cognitive events and other 'mental' bits concomitant with them (*caitta*). But there is no real type-difference between them. In fact all *svalakṣaṇas* are distinct and unique. They are also in perpetual flux. Thus, the colour-patches and the so-called 'mental' phenomena enjoy the same status here. They both have the characteristic of eventhood. All universals, properties, relations are, in this view, subjective creation or mental superimposition. This is a sort of monism, for there is only one type of entity, as well as a sort of nominalism for no non-particulars are admitted as real.

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika world is populated with three main types of particulars, certain (real) universals and one genuine relation. The particulars are substances, quality-instances, and action-moments. There are also some sub-categories of these three categories of particulars. Only a few of the universals are admitted as real. They generally coincide with natural kinds and metaphysical kinds. (See Chapter 12.) No special status is given to other relation. A so-called relation is only a 'connector' which may be either a subjective superimposition or a part of this world. If it is a part of this world, it falls under one of the three categories of particulars (cf. *saṃyoga*). This will be discussed in Chapter 12. The genuine relation which is admitted as real is called 'inherence' (*samavāya*) and believed to be indestructible like a universal.

Briefly, the following points should be noted. The English term 'quality' (or even 'property'), as it stands, is unsuitable for translating the Vaiśeṣika notion of *guṇa* (although in ordinary Sanskrit *guṇa* means exactly what is meant by 'quality' 'property' or 'attribute' in English).

The Vaiśeṣika *guṇas* are in fact a set of instantiations of different properties or qualities. They are what I wish to call quality-instances or quality-particulars, being locatable always in some particular substances or other. They can be called a set of 'locatees' even at the risk of being guilty of neologism.[1]

One may be reminded here of the concept of *qualia* of N. Goodman. *Qualia*, the basic individuals in Goodman's system, are such things as particular shades of colour, smells or different kinds of noise, which can occur repeatedly at many times and places.[2] But Nyāya quality-instances are thought to be unique to each occurrence, being occurrent or resident in the particular substance in question. On the other hand, Goodman's qualia might have some similarity to the *dharmas* of the Buddhist Abhidharma (under some interpretation of this *dharma* theory). Incidentally, the basic individuals in R. Carnap's *Aufbau*, called *Elementarerlebnisse*, bear only a partial similarity with the *svalakṣaṇas* of the Buddhist in that both are in some sense momentary.[3] Both are 'bits' of the total field of experience. For Carnap, these basic individuals cannot occur at more than one moment ('moment' being understood as the least discernible segment of time). The Buddhist *svalakṣaṇas* are also momentary existents (where moments are like time-atoms).

To return to Nyāya quality-instances. The ordinary expression, 'the quality of the pot is blue', is interpreted under the Nyāya theory as follows:

(1) An instance of blue (a particular blue-occurrence) is located or resident in another particular (a pot-substance) while the blue-universal resides in the blue-instance (the quality-particular) and the pot-universal resides in the particular pot.

It is now easy to constrast this with the ordinary (traditional) interpretation of the sentence:

(2) The blue-universal characterizes the pot-substance while the pot-universal is instantiated also in the same pot.

We should note that there is nothing in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika corresponding to the 'blue-universal' in (2). The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika blue-universal is the common character or the generality shared by all particular instances

[1] See my 'On the Notion of Locative in Sanskrit' (forthcoming in *Indian Journal of Linguistics*, Calcutta).

[2] N. Goodman (1951), pp. 96–101.

[3] See M. Dummett (1978), pp. 29–37, for a discussion of both Carnap and Goodman.

of blue. It does not reside or occur in blue things. It resides in all *blue-particulars*, and the blue particulars are, in their turn, occurrent in the things. (See Chapter 12.1.)

Actions in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika are explicitly said to be only movements of objects in space. They lead to the displacement of bodies. They are however 'momentary' in the sense that in each moment the so-called moving bodies 'inch forward' (i.e. get a new spatial location) with a *new* motion or action, which dies to make room, under suitable circumstances, for another *new* motion. The motions are therefore momentary motion-particulars. There is thus not just a single action or motion in a ball that moves for two minutes but a series of momentary motion-particulars. Such an 'atomic' notion of motion is supposed to answer some pertinent objection and paradoxes that Nāgārjuna pointed out while criticizing the general conception of motion in *Madhyamaka-śāstra*. (Chapter 2).[4]

The third ontology is holistic. This is the view (presumably of Bhartṛhari) that says that the ultimate reality is one unbreakable, unanalysable, unstructured whole, which is the ultimate reference of all linguistic expressions and all thoughts. In our thoughts and speech, however, we are in the habit of cutting bits and pieces out of the whole reality and assigning to each of them a 'metaphorical' existence. We mentally sever them from the whole (indivisible) reality, and reify them as reals. The system is monistic in the sense that there is only one existent entity. It refutes pluralism of any sort. The plurality of universals, particulars, relations etc. would be considered as part of the realm of 'metaphorical' existence – the realm that is essentially language-generated and mind-dependent. They are the products of *vikalpa* (= the imaginative and analytic faculty of the human mind). Our thought reifies such entities, and there cannot be any end to it. I shall briefly discuss these three views in Chapter 12. The Buddhist ontology is pluralistic, but it maintains monism at the second level, i.e. monism of kinds or sorts of particulars. The holistic ontology maintains monism at both levels. The Nyāya ontology is pluralistic at both levels, many particulars and many kinds of them.

11.2 *Phenomenalism and Atomism*

The attempt of the Yogācāra (Buddhist) idealists has been to show that our knowledge of the external world is not consistent, i.e. it does not

[4] Nāgārjuna, *Madhyamaka-kārikā*, ch. 2, especially verses 1–9. This may also be taken to be the tentative Nyāya answer to what is called Zeno's paradox.

yield a consistent theory of the external realities. Vasubandhu wanted to prove the paradoxicality of our notion of the external object in perception in his Yogācāra text *Viṃśikā (Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi)* in the following way. Some (i.e. the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas) hold that the object perceived is one (single) 'whole' (*eka*, an *avayavin*), e.g. a chair or a tree. Others (the Vaibhāṣika Buddhists) believe that it is a multitude of atoms (*aneka*, e.g. many colour-atoms) that we perceive. Still others (perhaps the Sautrāntika Buddhists) believe that we see a multitude of atoms formed in a conglomerate. All these views can be faulted easily. Hence, Vasubandhu says, the so-called external perception arises without there being any external object to regulate or control it just as it happens in dreams etc.[5]

In fact each of the three views depends on some form of atomism, either on the *material* atoms constituting the material bodies, the wholes such as a tree, or on the *phenomenalistic* atoms which constitute each perceived phenomenon and are therefore ultimately real according to the *Abhidharmakośa*, verse VI.4.[6] The first view is easily rejected by pointing out that we never realize the 'whole' in perception as a separate entity over and above its parts, constituents, or atoms. The difficulties of proving the distinctness of the whole from its parts are well known. Besides, atomism in general suffers from insuperable objections. The concept of an impartite and indivisible atom (which coming together with many others must constitute the material body or gross form) is, in short, paradoxical. For, Vasubandhu says, if six atoms came from six different directions to combine and 'touch' the atom in the middle, then it would have at least six parts, and if they came to occupy the same spatial location, the gross body would never be constituted by them. For there would not be the required increase in size of the constituted form since the atoms in this case would 'swallow' one another![7]

The Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophers struggled hard to get out of this dilemma in their atomism and I have already discussed their solution in Chapter 8.2. Here I shall concentrate upon the different versions of Buddhist atomism. Vasubandhu, however, in his non-Yogācāra text (*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*) defended atomism, i.e. the notion of atoms

[5] Vasubandhu, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, verse 16a.

[6] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, ch. VI, verse 4. E. Frauwallner had ascribed this verse to the Sautrāntika school. See *Die Philosophie des Buddhismus*, pp. 119–22. S. Katsura however argues that it is accepted also in the Vaibhāṣika school.

[7] Vasubandhu, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*, *Viṃśikā*, verse 12.

constituting the perceived phenomena. Although these atoms are not 'physical' in the sense of constituting the physical bodies of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika school, still the question of their 'extension' in space remains open. The atoms are by definition indivisible and partless. This nature would be contradicted if they had 'extension', i.e. 'touched' one another to form a continuous spatial stretch. The Vaibhāṣikas argue that they do not 'touch' for they have intervening space between them (cf. *sāntara*),[8] but a gathering of atoms can touch another similar gathering, for such a gathering is no longer impartite or indivisible. Hence we can say, 'a stone sticks to another stone' and 'one palm hits the other palm'. The other view maintains that there could be no gap between atoms (*nirantara*) when a conglomerate is perceived. Quoting an authority, Bhadanta, Vasubandhu says that although the atoms do not *touch*, when they are situated in the closest, gapless proximity we can say in words, 'they touched'.[9] This avoids the quandary of the previous view, for if there were gaps between atoms a third atom could move in and therefore the resistance that a cluster of atoms creates for another cluster would be difficult for us to explain. This could very well be a Sautrāntika view for Vasubandhu himself endorses this view.

The gatherings of atoms must be able to touch one another in this second view too. Although the gatherings are not separate entities from the atoms themselves, just as the atoms become visible as soon as they gather together they can likewise be 'touched' when they gather (*ta eva te saṃghātāḥ spṛśyante yathā rupyante.*)[10] The probable explanation, I suggest, is that the atoms must have *latent* tangibility (although they are impartite) which is actualized when there is a conglomeration, just as we must say that they have *latent* visibility (in spite of their being too subtle to be perceived individually) which is actualized when they gather together.

The Yogācāra Buddhists reject both views. As against the Vaibhāṣikas, they say that even the gatherings of atoms cannot be admitted to 'touch' one another unless the atoms themselves mutually touched one another (*sāvayavasyāpi saṃghātasya saṃyogānabhyupagamāt,* Vasubandhu

[8] Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośa*, under ch. I, verse 43.

[9] Vasubandhu, Ibid., '*nirantare tu spṛṣṭa-saṃjñeti Bhadantaḥ.*'

[10] Ibid. One may again be reminded of A. J. Ayer's comment that one may conceive of the minute physical particles as imperceptible only as an empirical consequence of their being so minute. We can likewise consider that the Vaibhāṣika atoms *can* touch but actually do not 'touch' individually. This is only an empirical consequence of their being indivisible or subtle. See Ayer (1973), p. 110.

in *Viṃśikā*).[11] Besides, it can never be maintained that an atom is a single indivisible entity. For if it has 'extension' or spatial division (*dig-bhāga-bheda*) it must be divisible into many. And if it does not have such extension, then no gathering of them can obstruct, for instance, the sunlight and we would thus have light everywhere, no light and shade distinction! Nor can an atom without extension cover another atom or even hit it to dislocate it. In fact, the philosophical motivation of the Yogācāra Buddhist is to show that an atom without spatial extension is as good as a mental entity, such as a mental feeling (cf. *vedanādi-vat*).[12] If, however, such obstruction of light, hitting, and covering etc. are said to belong to the gatherings of atoms—not to atoms individually—then, the idealist urges, a gathering becomes a *piṇḍa*, a real thing perhaps different from the constituent atoms themselves. But this would be yielding to the physicalism of the Nyāya-Vaiśesika school.

After Vasubahdhu, Diṅnāga in his *Ālambanaparīkṣā* formulated the Yogācāra thesis (against the Buddhist atomism) that the *ālambana*, 'the objective-causal support or foundation', of our sensory perception is not the so-called external reality, the atoms etc., but an 'internal cognizable form' (*antarjñeya-rūpa*) that falsely appears to be external. This 'internalism' of the knowable (or the cognizable) is of a piece with Yogācāra idealism. Diṅnāga attacked the Buddhist atomists and argued that as far as the 'causal' support of the perceptual awareness is concerned we can dispense with all references to the external world. The implication of such argument is that the causal theory of perception may be fundamentally flawed. Since only a few fragments of this text survive in Sanskrit (though there is a Tibetan translation), I shall closely follow here the English translation and analysis of the text by Tola and Dragonetti.[13]

Apparently the Buddhist atomists argued against their Yogācāra opponents that to account for what is called the *ālambana-pratyaya* in Buddhist terminology, the causal and objective foundation of our perceptions, we have to refer to the external world, the atoms in space,

[11] Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi, *Viṃśikā*, under verse 13.

[12] See also Śāntarakṣita, verse 1970. For an elaborate study of Indian atomism see M. Gangopadhyaya. According to Saṃghabhadra, it seems there are two types of atoms, the real and the provisional (*prajñaptisat*). The assemblage of the real ones is what we see, but the provisional ones are reached by analysis, through inference (*Nyāyānusāra*, Taishō XLIII 1834 ii 992c–993a). I owe this information to Dr K. Mimaki.

[13] See Diṅnāga, *Ālambanaparīksā*. Also see Tola and Dragonetti, 'Dignāga's *Ālambanaparīkṣāvṛtti*', pp. 126–7.

and hence the external realities exist beside the *citta*, awareness or consciousness. Diṅnāga's strategy against this realism is this: the causal-objective foundation or *ālambana* by definition must fulfil two conditions: (i) it must cause the perception-episode, and (ii) it must also be apprehended in that cognition. The atoms, if they exist, may cause perceptions in the way the sense-organs do, but we can never apprehend individual atoms in such perceptions. The gross form which we apprehend in perception can never cause perceptions to arise for all the atomists presumably maintain that the gross form is only a phenomenal or nominal object which lacks causal power. Hence neither the atoms nor the (external) gross forms can be the objective-causal support of our perceptions.

Diṅnāga mentioned a third view (ascribed to Vāgbhaṭa by the commentator Vinītadeva). According to this view, the 'form of the atom-conglomerate' (cf. *sañcitākāra*) may be the efficient (causal) conditon (cf. *sādhana*), and this form with the causally potent atoms generates perception and it is the same form of the conglomerate that becomes apprehended in that perception. Since the form of the conglomerate must belong to the atoms themselves (for there is nothing else there to belong to), we can say that the atoms themselves in this way fulfil both conditions and hence can be the required 'objective-causal support' (*ālambana*) of perception. This view implies that the atoms must have several *forms* or *aspects*, atomic form as well as the form of the conglomerate. We do not perceive their atomicity (atomic forms) because our eyes are not potent enough to grasp such subtleties, but we do perceive their 'conglomerate-form'. There is no contradiction, it is argued, in holding that atoms may have many forms, for in fact all objects may have several forms of manifesting themselves, several aspects under which they present themselves. For example, we may grasp only one aspect of an object, say colour, and not another, say solidity, in our visual perception, although the object may be said to present itself under both aspects. Therefore Tola and Dragonetti write (p.112):

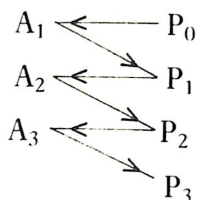
> We can therefore think according to the indicated arguments that the atom is the cognition's support, because it is something which produces a cognition that bears the representation of one of its forms of manifestation, of one of the aspects under which it can be presented to us.[14]

Diṅnāga, in order to refute this modified form of atomism, gave a

[14] Tola and Dragonetti, p. 112.

very complicated argument which I shall skip in this context. However, we may note the general point for emphasis. Atomism has its own problems, but still it is forced upon us to explain satisfactorily our knowledge and perception of the external world. The Yogācāra Buddhists uphold a thesis which gives an *idealistic* analysis of our knowledge and perception where references to the external world are completely eliminated. Therefore the Yogācāra Buddhists spare no pains to insist that atomism of any form is an incoherent doctrine. The upshot of all this may be that the representationalistic interpretation of Buddhist atomism cannot avoid inconsistencies completely and hence the idealistic phenomenalism wins the day.

We may put the Yogācāra thesis in the following way. Each awareness-episode splits itself automatically into two forms, one taking the form of perception, the other the form of a percept. Obviously there would be many well-known difficulties in maintaining a thesis of this kind. One of the problems that Diṅnāga raises here and answers is this: If part of our awareness (a moment of our consciousness-series) becomes the percept and the other part its perception, if one provides the 'causal' support and the other is caused by it, how can the latter be simultaneous with the former? Some alternative answers have been suggested. First, cause and effect can co-arise, i.e. be simultaneous; the Buddhist *pratyaya* doctrine (the notion of causality) can very well accommodate this position. Even the Naiyāyikas, Diṅnāga points out, admit that clay is a causal factor of the clay pot although the two, the clay and the pot, coexist invariably. In fact since the percept and perception are *invariably* connected one can very well be called the 'causal condition' (*pratyaya*) of the other. The second point (it is often belaboured by the Yogācāra Buddhists) is that the percept assigns the power to its relevant perception to 'imitate' itself (the percept or the object). Alternatively, there may be sequential conditioning, i.e. the process that mutually and sequentially conditions the object and its perception. Since the 'momentariness' doctrine is assumed by the Yogācāra also, the following series is probably envisaged here:



where A_1, A_2, and A_3 stand for different percepts at three different moments in sequence, and P1, P2, and P3 for three different perception-forms of the consciousness at three succeeding moments. This mutual-sequential conditioning is also asserted to be the beginningless character ('power') of our consciousness (*anādikālikaṃ śaktiś cānyonyahetuke*; Diṅnāga).[15]

One could say that we are back here to the same old problem even in this idealistic phenomenalism which accepts the perpetual 'flux' doctrine as an essential part of it. Our problem arose earlier because we wanted the 'object' of our perception, or what is represented in perception, to be also causally responsible for that perception. Even if the 'object' is taken to be only a mental representation (i.e. an internal cognizable *form*), the problem reappears in another guise. To be causally responsible, the mental representation must precede its perception and to be perceived, i.e. to be grasped by the perception, it must coexist with its perception at the same moment. But since the mental representations fluctuate at every moment, these two conditions cannot be fulfilled by the same mental representation. Hence one may be forced to accept the position that the percept or the object need not coexist exactly with its perception but only precede it immediately. This does not seem entirely counter-intuitive if we think, for example, that we can see a star today from the earth even though it was destroyed some time ago!

Although Diṅnāga found fault with various types of atomism mentioned above, he nevertheless seemed to have come back to accept another sort of atomism. In *Pramāṇasamuccaya* 1.4 Diṅnāga cited a passage from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* 1.10 where it is said that our perceptions (sensory awareness) have 'aggregates' (of atoms) as its objective support (*sañcitālambana*). This statement may run counter to another statement in the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* which says that sensory perception grasps only the exclusive particular (*svalakṣaṇa*), a doctrine which Diṅnāga accepted and elaborated in his own treatise. In other words, if the sole object of a perceptual awareness is a single unique object, a particular datum, how can we say that the 'aggregate' of many atoms is what is perceived? Diṅnāga refers to the further remarks of Vasubandhu who wishes to resolve it as follows: Each of the sense-perceptions is said to have a unique (single) datum (a particular) as its object with reference (only) to their *āyatanas*, i.e. sense-field: 'With reference to the unique particulars of their

[15] Diṅnāga, *Ālambanaparīkṣā*, verse 8.

(relevant) 'field' or 'domain' of operation (*āyatana*), these perceptions are described to have (each time) as their objects one unique datum or a particular (svalakṣaṇa). Not so with reference to the unique particulars of the substances (atoms).'[16]

This shows that the Buddhist representationalistic tradition may allow at least two types of unanalysable simples as phenomena: atoms, i.e. the subtle, minute, impartite, particle-like simples, and the unique, particular, unrepeated, fluctuating data belonging to the spheres or domains of operation of different sense-faculties (*āyatana*). By the expression 'spheres' or 'domain of operation' (*āyatana*) is meant the five sensory-fields: coloured shapes or the visibles (*rūpa*), taste, smell, touch, and sound. Vasubandhu apparently accepts that perception may be generated by either a single substantial object, a particular (e.g. perception of blue) or a multitude of them (e.g. perception of a collection of jewels from a distance). But in either case, a particular datum is perceived, i.e. a particularly unique representation of the 'sphere' of the visible – an unrepeated coloured shape – is seen, although the causal responsibility may be assigned, in some cases, to many objects (i.e. many atoms). Diṅnāga seems to have conceded this point by saying that since perception may be generated by a multitude of 'objects' (atoms), it could be described as having for its object (*viṣaya*) a generality, a multitude, i.e. a non-particular, but such a multitude invariably belongs to the particularly unique 'sphere' of operation of that sense-faculty (i.e. the unique sense-field).[17]

Both Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti seem to accept here the Sautrāntika atomism along with its theory of external realities but this may be only a tentative concession. Diṅnaga introduced his own notion of *svalakṣaṇa*, uniquely particular datum, or the non-repeatable given, which belongs to the 'sphere of operation' (*āyatana*) of each sense faculty and which is grasped by each act of perception. These *svalakṣaṇas* are unanalysable and unrepeatable simples. Yaśomitra explains a *svalakṣaṇa* as that whose essence lies in its capacity to be cognized by a sense-perception or for belonging to a particular sphere of operation of a sense-faculty (*cakṣur-vijñānavijñeyatvādi, rūpāyatanatvādi vā*).[18] Diṅnāga comments (in his *Pramānasamuccaya*) about *svalakṣaṇa*, 'The percept of a sense-perception is a *rūpa* (i.e. belongs to the

[16] M. Hattori, pp. 89–90.

[17] Diṅnāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, ch. I, verse 4cd. Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*, *Pratyakṣa* section, verses 194–207.

[18] Yaśomitra under *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*, ch. I, verse 10, p. 37.

spheres of sensory faculty) which is cognizable [simply] as it is and which is inexpressible.[19] The same line is repeated by Diṅnāga at the end of his examination of the Mīmāṃsā theory.

This 'inexpressibility' of the unique particulars can very well be challenged. The idea behind this claim is probably that the unique datum of sense-perception cannot be designated by a name, i.e. it is unnamable, because we cannot 'baptize' it with a name. The 'baptizing' situation presupposes a shared experiential datum between the name-giver and the name-user (i.e. *saṁketa-kāra* and *vyavahartṛ*). More importantly, it presupposes persistence of the datum during the time between when the name is given and understood and when it is used. The shared experiential data must be distinct from the unique, non-repeatable particulars or data which do not persist through time (and which we call *svalakṣaṇas,* following Diṅnāga). Therefore, what we name here cannot be the unique, momentary datum but a shared feature. (This is probably the reason why Diṅnāga claims that the adding of even a name to the percept is an 'imagination' or *vikalpa.*) But if the name-giver and the name-user are the same, why can he not name the unique datum he experiences?[20] From the Buddhist point of view, the answer may be simple. I can name my own unique datum only through an 'image' or a mental representation of it because only through this presentation can I connect the name (a word) with the object (the datum to be named). This, however, raises a number of important and intricate philosophic issues, problems of proper names, private language argument and so on, which I shall skip in this context. The Buddhist position is enigmatic. On one reading, it says that we cannot talk *about* the unique particulars for we cannot assign any descriptive property to them. On another reading, we talk about only the unique particulars, for there is nothing else real there to talk *about.*

Buddhist atomism reduces the spatial extension of external realities to atoms, the infinitesimals. The Buddhist 'flux' doctrine reduces the temporal extension, i.e. the temporal continuity of objects, to moments (the infinitesimals again). Modern examples are found in the techniques of photography and the movie. In photography, when discrete dots on a plate are put together without (perceptible) gaps, they create the picture of an extended object, the picture of a table. In a

[19] Diṅnāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya,* ch. I, verse 5cd. See Hattori, pp. 27 and 67. I follow partially Hattori's interpretation here.

[20] See Śāntarakṣita, especially verse 871.

movie show, a sequence of frames showing the movements of a horse running are projected before our eyes fast enough (without perceptible time-gaps) to generate the illusion of a continuous motion-picture of a horse running. Although quite unaware of these examples, the Buddhist atomists and those Buddhists who upheld the flux doctrine but refuted atomism debated among themselves to find out the relative advantage of one position over the other.

Śubhagupta, probably a later Vaibhāṣika, formulated a powerful defence of Buddhist atomism and realistic explanation of our knowledge and external perception against the attack by such Yogācāra Buddhists as Diṅnāga. His view is reported by Śāntarakṣita (and Kamalaśīla in his *Pañjikā*), and I shall depend upon this source for the following (philosophical) reconstruction of his view. In this view, the gathering of atoms is compared with the gathering of hairs. From a distance a single strand of hair is not visible, but when there are many of them together we see them. Similarly, atoms because of their minuteness are not perceptible singly but when many are gathered together we unquestionably perceive them. To be faithful with the Vaibhāṣika position (which maintains that external realities are directly perceived, not inferred, and hence it cannot strictly be called representationalism) Śubhagupta must say that we perceive many atoms directly just as we perceive many hairs together but we may not perceive them *as* many atoms. There is invariably the awareness of one unitary gross form in our external perceptions. But, Śubhagupta says, this appearance of the unitary gross form or the continuous spatial stretch is illusory, just as the awareness of continuity or a continuous temporal stretch is false when, for example, we keep looking at a lamp burning (for the lamp burns at each moment, i.e. there is a series of moments of burning which appears continuous).[21]

The possible implication of Śubhagupta's theory of perception may be this: the gross form or the illusory spatial stretch must be the apprehensible object of our constructive or conceptual perception (*savikalpa pratyakṣa*), which can be illusory in any case. In non-constructive or *nirvikalpa* stage, however, we must be perceiving the atoms themselves, a multitude of them, though not as one unitary form. Similarly we may see many hairs or many trees from a distance at one sweep, and due to distance or even due to the weakness of our eyesight we may construe in our conceptual perception those hairs or

[21] Ibid., verses 1971–8.

those trees *as* forming one continuous spatial spread. The Sautrāntikas, however, in order to maintain their representationalism (according to which the existence of external atoms is only to be inferred, not perceived), would say that even in our non-conceptual or *nirvikalpa* perception we grasp the continuous spatial stretch or the gross form which is only a phenomenal or nominal entity, for arguments can be given to show that this form is nothing but an aggregate of atoms. But I believe that if the Sautrāntikas make this concession (the above is only my own philosophical reconstruction of the Sautrāntika view from various, mainly Yogācāra, sources) this type of representationalism can hardly be sustained against the Yogācāra critique. In what follows, I shall summarize rather the more interesting debate between the Vaibhāṣikas (Śubhagupta) and the Yogācāra Buddhists.

Śubhagupta says: Just as a Yogācāra idealist accepts the appearance of the temporal continuity of an object such as a pot, although he knows that it is an illusion since it is only a series of representations or similar momentary data without any ostensible time-gap, similarly one can accept the appearance of the spatial continuity (extension) of an object such as a pot as only an illusion. For it is only the presentation of the cluster of atoms in space without any detectable spatial gaps.

The Yogācāra idealists answer: If the so-called atoms generate perceptions out of their own power, why are they not also grasped in such perceptions? In other words, why do we not make a *parāmarśa* of the form 'I see atoms or even a cluster of them'? And if this is not possible, how can we say that they are perceived at all? The momentariness of all objects has been established by separate evidence (*pramāṇa*), in fact by an argument (the evidence of reason (*anumāna*)). Therefore, we believe the temporal continuity of objects to be illusory. But what is the *independent* evidence for establishing the atoms as external realities? Śubhagupta answers with an argument (evidence of reason) to prove the atom-stimulants as external realities. A gross object is always made up of a cluster of smaller or more subtle parts: witness a mountain range which is formed by a number of small hills put together. Hence this *gross* pot that is seen must be made up of a cluster of subtler, atomic constituents. The Yogacāra idealist replies saying that this will not do. The so-called *grossness* (*sthūlatva*) of the object is precisely what is in dispute here. Does this grossness really belong to the object *out there?* If so, then you have already assumed what you intended to prove initially, namely the externality of objects, or the existence of objects out there. For grossness to belong to the

outside thing, you must first establish that there are external things to which such grossness could belong. If, however, you say that grossness is that which invariably appears as such in the experience of all persons alike, including the foolish and the wise, the illiterate and the educated, then such a representation of grossness is present even in a dream object (for example, in a dream-elephant) or in perceptual errors.

The debate seems to be evenly balanced at this stage. The eternal dispute between realism and idealism (or should we say, externalism and internalism?) turns mainly upon the possibility of finding an independent criterion for distinguishing veridical perceptions from non-veridical ones, that is, upon the satisfactory resolution of the problem of illusion. The realistic doctrine of Buddhism accepted the concept of *arthakriyā-saṃvāda* 'accordance with the function of the object' in order to distinguish true perception from illusion. What is meant by this 'accordance with the function of object'? This is how it is explained. Perceiving a gem on the floor I may rush to pick it up, but if it were a false perception (misperception or illusion), I will never be able to pick it up. But if it is a true one, my effort will be crowned with success. In the latter case, there is 'accord' with the function of the object (*arthakriyā*), but in the former there is *discord.* Such an accord with the expected behaviour and with what is expected to follow that behaviour constitutes the veridicalness of an awareness. However, the Yogācāra idealist is unimpressed by such a criterion. For, according to him, it begs the question. The argument assumes the externality of objects and their expected behaviours without really proving the thesis. It is like Samuel Johnson's wanting to demonstrate the existence of a stone as an external reality by kicking it. It even resembles the attempt of G. E. Moore, who, in his Cambridge lectures, waved his two hands to show their existence.

The Yogācāra idealist has in fact assimilated this concept of 'accord with the object' (*arthakriyā*) into his own theory of cognition. For if the said concept means congruence or coherence (or the potentiality '*sāmarthya*' to have such congruence) with the expected behaviour-pattern that invariably and immediately follows a cognitive event, then it is possible for a veridical perception to meet this criterion even if we do not assume that the objects are *external* to perceptions. In fact, this is also the answer of the Yogācāra idealist (for example, of Dharmakīrti) to the question of finding a criterion for distinguishing true perception from illusion – the former has 'accord with the object'

while the latter does not. The difference between a true perception of a gem and a (perceptual) illusion of it is much like the difference between a real gem and a fake one. The difference in expectancy or in the resulting behaviour pattern is accountable by reference to the *causal history* of a real gem and that of a fake one. For example, in normal circumstances you can trade the real gem for money, but not a fake one, and this is obviously due to their different causal history. Similarly the *causal ancestry* of a true perception and that of a false one, account for the differences in what follows as a result in either case. There is congruence with expected behaviour patterns in one case, but the other lacks it. If the real gem and the fake gem are so much alike that they agree in all conceivable patterns of behaviour or results (for example, if both can earn you a decent sum of money, are equally glittering, and are unbreakable under similar pressure), then the Yogācāra will argue that there is little point in calling one real and the other fake, unless we are already prejudiced with the idea that one of them is certainly real and the other is not. In other words, we have already disqualified ourselves to judge the real from the unreal since we have implicitly or explicitly prejudged the issue according to some other criterion. If, however, we are already familiar with the *causal ancestry* of both gems, or both perceptions which have determined the issue, then the issue has already been resolved for us; we do not need any further arbiter of truth. We may, with Johnson, just kick the stone in front of us to prove that it is real.

11.3 Direct Realism

The phenomenalist and the representationalists find it difficult to explain our so-called knowledge of thing-substance, the solid, three-dimensional, opaque objects, such as pots, stones, chairs, and tables, because of their alleged distance from what is epistemologically prior, i.e. the so-called immediate objects of perception. We have seen that the Buddhist will treat such objects as having only a 'nominal' existence and thus would derive benefit from the best of both worlds. The Nyāya realist, however, subscribing to naïve or direct realism, says that the best way to make sense of our pre-philosophical intuition about the felt existence of these objects is to regard them as directly grasped by our visual perception. The 'furniture' of the external world in this theory consists of these wholes, the three-dimensional bodies. It is therefore incumbent upon philosophers who hold this theory to explain the notion of 'wholes'. The Buddhist adopts a double standard

and makes the wholes more ephemeral than their constituents. Nyāya abhors the double standard and accepts the thesis that the wholes and parts are separate existents having independent 'lives' of their own. I have already given some Nyāya arguments in favour of the independent existence of the whole over and above its parts (Chapter 8.3). Let us now look at some further arguments.

Uddyotakara claims that if it is reasonable to say that I have grasped the *same* object by both my vision and touch, I have already moved away from phenomenalism and even representationalism and leaned towards (direct) realism. It seems obvious to all of us that I hold the same pen to write with as the one that I see also with my eyes. The point is expressed by Akṣapāda in Nyāyasūtra 3.1.1. where the context was, however, to argue in favour of the independent existence of the self or a stable cognizing 'substance' distinct from the evanescent cognitive events. The Nyāyasūtra 3.1.1. says 'Because the same *artha* ("thing" or "object") is grasped by seeing and touching.' Uddyotakara regards this to be one of the few succinct philosophical arguments which, if sound, would not only contribute to the proofs for the existence of an enduring cognizing self-substance but also show that the enduring substances such as pots and tables exist! He quotes this *sūtra* in his elaborate commentary upon Nyāyasūtra 1.1.14 to argue that the objects of sight and touch include not only the phenomenal properties, but also the things which they characterize.[22]

The Buddhist position, as we have noted repeatedly, is that we see only a colour-expanse and touch only what belongs to the 'world of touch' (*spraṣṭavyāyatana*). Uddyotakara questions this platitude and asks: How do we know that we see a colour-expanse and touch only a 'touch'? One may answer that an awareness of colour-expanse arises in one case and an awareness of touch arises in the other. This argument is inconclusive. For it is undeniable that an awareness of a pot arises also where colour is seen and touch is touched. Hence one has to show that this awareness of the pot in such a perceptual situation falsely appears to be perceptual. It has already been argued that we cannot say that we infer the pot instead of seeing it in such cases (Chapter 8.3). We require a philosophic account of the origin of the awareness of the pot, false or true, along with that of colour and touch. One way to account for this awareness is to say that the colour-expanse, touch etc. being cognized with regard to a particular location in space, a 'pot-like'

[22] Uddyotakara (B), pp. 73–8.

object appears in our awareness through a sort of 'mental synthesis' (*pratisandhāna*). The Buddhist would have to say that there is only a bundle of sensibilia (where? in the outside space?) which makes the pot-like appearance possible. This appearance is, however, deceptive. But can this claim be sustained?

What meaning can we attach to such expressions as 'a pot-like appearance' or 'a tree-like appearance' when there are no such things as a pot or a tree in reality? Let us say that a specific conglomeration (cf. *saṃsthāna-viśeṣa* = special internal arrangement) of colour, touch etc. is what we call a pot, and another specific (distinct from the former) conglomeration is what we call a tree and so on. Uddyotakara replies that this will not do. For if the so-called conglomeration or internal arrangement is something distinct and different from the colour etc. (the constitutents), then the entire issue becomes only a matter of terminological dispute. For what the Buddhist would call a specific internal arrangement (which is presumably responsible for our awareness of a pot), Nyāya would call a pot-substance. But if the conglomeration is nothing else over and above the constituent colour etc., then it would be difficult to explain how we have an awareness of a pot from a specific conglomeration and another awareness of a lump of clay from another conglomeration supposedly of the same or similar constituents. For we see first a lump of clay and then a pot made out of it. In short, the Nyāya thesis is this: the whole is constituted of parts, pieces or portions, no doubt, but to the extent that we cognize the whole as a *unity*, it is to be regarded as a distinct ontological entity. The Buddhist 'bundle' theory of substance is unacceptable to Nyāya, for it does not grant that the 'bundle' has a separate 'substantial' existence of its own. We have seen that the Buddhist ascribes only a 'nominal' existence to it. If something having a *nominal* existence is also as much real as anything could be within a given scope, then the dispute can be brought to a premature close by Nyāya by simply rejecting the 'double standard' of existence. However, it would be more interesting and philosophically fruitful to analyse further the debate (presumably between Uddyotakara and Diṅnāga).

According to the Buddhist, the Nyāya claim that we grasp the same object through sight and touch is based upon a confusion. It confuses what is immediately perceived through the senses with what is indirectly, i.e. *mentally*, grasped (cf. *manobuddhiḥ smṛtyupasthāpitatvāt*, Diṅnāga). For instance, as Diṅnāga has argued, the sense of sight grasps the colour white, not what is white. The adjectival use of 'white'

(*śveta*) to designate the thing perceived is either a metaphorical extension or is due to a grammatical peculiarity, viz. elision of a possessive suffix (*matuv-lopa,* as permitted by Pāṇini). In other words, when I use 'white' to designate the thing-substance *constructed* in my perception, I use it either metaphorically to designate not the colour white directly, but the physical location where the colour white is supposedly present (the non-metaphorical meaning of 'white' being only the colour white; or this particular use of 'white' is in fact a contracted form from the expression 'white-possessing' (*śveta* + *matup,* followed by elision etc.). In this way, 'I see white' would unpack, according to Diṅnāga, as 'I see something possessing the colour white', and therefore *seeing* here is no longer a sensory awareness but a mental (constructive) awareness aided by memory (*manobuddhi* etc.). Otherwise, Diṅnāga argues, looking at a flower we may have an awareness of fragrance, seeing honey we may have an awareness of sweetness, but in neither case can we say that we *see* that it is fragrant or that it is sweet. Both cases are constructions of the form '*x* is fragrance-possessing' or '*x* is sweetness-possessing'. The qualifiers, fragrance and sweetness, are not percepts in the given case, they are only remembered properties. Therefore these are cases of mental awareness, mistakenly confused as sensory awareness. The case of *seeing* a white thing is similar.[23]

For the sake of argument, both Diṅnāga and his commentator Jinendrabuddhi concede that we may not only see the colour white, but also the white thing, and touch not simply a touch, but also the thing having that touch. However, the coloured thing here would be a 'substance' only in the sense of *being* a power to produce such colour-sensation, while the thing grasped by touch would be another 'substance' in the sense of being a power to produce such tactile sensation. These two 'substances' then can hardly be held to be identical, since they are grasped by different senses, and are different *powers* to produce different sensation. In this reply Diṅnāga apparently assumes some representationalistic stance, for he allows 'substances' to be powers or potentialities. The Nyāya reply would probably be that if these two different 'substances' are not identified as one because they are only apprehensible by different senses, then the sense-independent character of these so-called 'power-substances' would be lost. If the 'power-substances' are essentially dependent upon their

[23] Diṅnāga, *Pramāṇasamuccaya,* ch. I, verses 21–3; see Jambuvijayaji, p. 170.

being sensed, representationalism will dissolve into idealistic phenomenalism. In other words, the pertinent question will be: what are these power-substances? How can their essential sense-dependent character be explained?

Diṅnāga has formulated the following argument to show that the whole as a unity is not distinct from its constituents, colours etc: '*rūpādyagrahe tadbuddhy-abhāvāt*' 'Since an awareness of *that* (= whole) does not arise unless colour etc. are grasped'.[24]

Since we cannot be aware of the pot-substance until and unless there arises an awareness of colour etc., we should regard the former as non-distinct from the latter. For, if x were distinct from y, it would be possible at least once for there to be an awareness of x without an awareness of y necessarily arising with it. Colour is distinct from taste, and hence we can be aware of one without being necessarily aware of the other. Colour and taste therefore are two clear cases of distinct entities.

There are some traditional Indian examples of compound entities—entities which are, it is argued, non-distinct from their components. Soup is nothing but the mixture of water and meat. Similarly, a row of houses, an army, a forest – all these are fictional unities, like the fictional whole, as the Buddhist would argue, for they are not usually claimed to be separate entities. From a distance we can see the forest, and not the trees, but the Buddhist will say that what we really see is a cluster of trees, for there is no seeing of the forest without the seeing of the trees.

Uddyotakara tries to construct a counter-example, a case where sometimes it would be possible to grasp the whole, the thing, without necessarily grasping the colour etc. Take the case of a crystal. It always reflects some colour or other, and we may never see it when it appears under its original 'neutral' colour. Nevertheless we can perceive the crystal (the whole or the substance) though we may never grasp its neutral (real) colour. Under Nyāyasūtra 3.1.1., Uddyotakara cites another possible counter-example. On a dark night, when a line of white cranes flies over the sky, we see the birds without seeing their particular colour. One may reject this counter-example by insisting that there is some colour presentation, however dim, which I must see in order to be able to see the cranes. Nyāya may then revert to its more fundamental claim that there must be some colour representation in

[24] Jambuvijayaji, p. 172, quoted by Uddyotakara under NS 1.1.14. See Hattori, p. 204, l. 37; p. 206, l. 1 for Vasudhararakṣita's translation.

the object to enable us to see the object (the thing), to distinguish it from the environment, but one need not *see* that colour exactly in order to be able to see the birds in the case under consideration. This point has been argued already at some length. (See Chapter 7).

The 'crystal' case is illuminating. Since the crystal is a non-fluctuating substance which remains the same even under different colour representation, we have to say that we see the crystal without ever seeing its 'real' colour. If the crystal is regarded as a phenomenalistic substance, which is in perpetual flux, then with each colour-representation it would be a different crystal. Therefore, to refute Uddyotakara's contention, the Buddhist might have to appeal to his well-entrenched doctrine of universal flux. But even if we hold the crystal to be a fluctuating substance, we cannot explain the following case. Two persons, one with a diseased (jaundiced) eye and the other with normal vision, are looking at a conch-shell. One sees it as yellow while the other as white. Are there two different conch-shells, or, if you like, two different colour-expanses (*rūpa*) in the same spatial location? Or is the entity seen in either case *internal* to the awareness itself? In this way we are taken back again to the mentalistic interpretation of the sense-data.

Uddyotakara's counter-example may not be totally satisfactory. To strengthen his point Uddyotakara answers Diṅnāga with the further counter-argument: '*Upalabhyasya samastair upalabhyair vyapadeśa*'. 'The perceived (whole) is described with all the (other) perceived characteristics taken together.'[25]

To explain: a piece of sandalwood, for example, is not only perceived by us, but we also 'describe' it as having a white colour, a bitter taste, strong fragrance, and a cool touch. All these characteristics are perceived individually in the same spatial location, and, to be sure, each of them can in turn be described individually. For example, the percept, the colour white, can be described as white colour, as a quality, and so on. But it cannot be described in terms of any other perceived characteristics presumably belonging to the sandalwood. Only the sandalwood can be described as having all such characteristics as white colour and bitter taste. If the piece of sandalwood is identical with the set of such characteristics, we would then have to say that the set of characteristics is also described as having the same set of characteristics. But this would be an odd statement. Hence, the 'have'

[25] Uddyotakara (B), p. 76; for his criticism of Diṅnāga's 'Tad-agrahe tadbudhy-abhāvāt', see pp. 74–75.

relationship would require the sandalwood to be a distinct unity.

Does the argument really hold? What is the exact meaning of this 'have' relation? It probably stands for a non-relational tie between a predicated property (or a particular feature) and the subject entity. In this way, any perceived characteristic as well as the entire set of sensibilia (or all essential properties) can be predicated of the whole, the piece of sandalwood. But it would be absurd to say that the set of all properties is predicated of the same set of all properties taken together.[26]

Uddyotakara says that if a perceived entity is said to be predicated of another perceived entity, then these two entities are presupposed to be non-identical. This point is illustrated with the help of the 'belongs to' relation, which is also similar to the 'have' relation. Uddyotakara uses the following example. We say, for example, that the water-jug belongs to the brahmin. Certainly we see them both and hold them to be distinct entities. The Buddhist argues that we do say 'The elephant belongs to the army', and 'The tree belongs to the forest'. But the army and the forest are nothing but clusters, and hence the 'belongs to' relation does not always presuppose distinctness of the relata. Uddyotakara replies by saying that even an army or a forest is to be regarded as a distinct entity.

In the case of substantial things such as a piece of sandalwood the constituents in fact come together to form a unity, a whole, whereas in the case of an army or forest we have only a plurality constituted by loosely scattered constituents. Uddyotakara not only claims the separate reality of the wholes, as unities, but also goes headlong to assert the independence of the forest over the trees! I shall skip his arguments in this context.

In sum, the Buddhist may not even dispute the perceptibility of the thing-substance, a piece of sandalwood, but would nevertheless insist that the piece of sandalwood, if it is perceived, is necessarily perceived as non-distinct from all the sensibilia. It is never perceived independently. To this, Uddyotakara replies that the so-called lack of perception of the thing-substance as a distinct entity may be accounted for in two different ways. It may be that the entity not perceived does not exist as a separate entity. Or it may be that the entity exists, but its

[26] Our puzzle with the 'have' relation is a very ancient one, and the issues involved are much more complicated. J. L. Mackie would have called it the 'logico-linguistic' argument for a substratum, see his *Problems from Locke*, p. 78. See also Mackie's comments about 'powers as substances', pp. 14–15.

nature is such that it does not ordinarily figure in sense-perception as a separate entity. This dual possibility renders Diṅnāga's argument as well as his conclusion dubious (*saṁdigdha*), because his reason is inconclusive (*anaikāntika*). Diṅnāga's evidence, viz. the lack of independent perception of the thing-substance, is compatible with either of the above alternatives. One is thus left with a choice. One may choose between taking, along with the Nyāya, the whole or the substance to be a unity (a real one), or, one may, along with the Buddhist, regard it as a mere fiction.

The Nyāya wholes are, however, unities rather than whole durable substances in the usual sense. The identity of the wholes, in Nyāya, cannot be maintained over time if even some minor parts keep changing. The continued existence of the Nyāya whole is destroyed when it loses even its minutest parts (a new similar whole is created in its place, however) or when these parts do not remain in certain relation to each other. I therefore destroy my shirt simply by taking a thread out of it (although I thereby get a 'new' shirt), and using exactly the same material one can make yet another shirt if only the arrangements are different. In other words, parts must stay in certain relations for the Naiyāyika's whole to continue to exist. If every year I go on changing one part of my car, I get, according to Nyāya, a 'new' car each year. But if perchance, with all the discarded parts of my old car some gifted mechanic creates a car looking exactly like my original car, it would still be another 'new' car, as far as Nyāya is concerned. For a thing once destroyed cannot be re-created (*na hi naṣṭasya punar utthānam*).[27]

[27] This is the age-old puzzle about the ship of Theseus. The Nyāya resolution of the puzzle is strikingly peculiar. Notice that the Nyāya conception of *avayavin* (material bodies?) is such that identity of material bodies cannot be maintained even with what is called today the Closest Continuer Theory. (This has been developed to resolve the issues connected with the identity of the self.) Modern philosophers have applied this to the puzzle about the identity over time (Nozick, pp. 33 f.). Notice that in Nyāya a problem like the one we usually conceive of with the ship of Theseus will not arise. If one plank is taken away, it is not the same ship any more! This has undoubtedly some implication for the Nyāya theory about the identity of the self, but I must reserve this problem for a later occasion.

12

Universals

. . . we succeed in avoiding all notice of universals as such, until the study of philosophy forces them upon our attention.

B. RUSSELL

A concept and an object need no glue to fit them together

M. DUMMETT

12.1 *The Vaiśeṣika Notion of Real Universals*

DISCUSSION about the problem of universals usually starts (in the Western context) with Plato's theory of forms along with Aristotle's critique of forms and his own doctrine of universals. In the Indian context the starting-point has always been the early *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* discussion of 'existent-ness' (*sattā* or *bhāva*) and 'generic properties' (*sāmānya*). Having established in the first 'lesson' (*āhnika*) of Chapter 1, the three types of realities, namely substance, quality and action (motion), the author of the *sūtras* goes on in the second 'lesson' of the same chapter to establish the following thesis:[1]

(1) There is a hierarchy of 'generalities', consisting of 'higher' and 'lower' generalities, which are dependent upon the way we understand them (*buddhy-apekṣam* = 'mind-dependent'?).
(2) There are (at least) four universals (generalities) which are asserted to be objectively real (i.e. mind-independent): existent-ness, substancehood, qualityhood, and actionhood (Sūtras 1.2.4, 1.2.5.).

Between sūtras 1.2.7 and 1.2.18, some arguments are formulated to show that:

(3) Existent-ness is a separate entity (*arthāntara*), i.e. an entity distinct from existents, i.e. substances, qualities, and actions.
(4) Similarly, substancehood is an entity separate from individual substances, qualityhood is distinct from qualities, and actionhood from actions.

[1] Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 1.2.3–18, pp. 8–10.

(5) Existent-ness is one, and is an invariant property of different existents, viz. substances, qualities, and actions.

To understand the philosophical importance of this Vaiśeṣika thesis we must clarify the terms it uses.

Regarding (1) it is pointed out that something can be a more inclusive generality, a 'higher' universal, from the point of view of the other generalities included within it, and a 'lower' universal from the point of view of a generality or generalities that include it.

What is expressed in this rather cumbrous way can be explained as follows: the class of substances is called 'higher' because it includes the classess of pots and chairs and so on, and it is called 'lower' because it is included in the general class of existents.

This seems to be to be a better and clearer interpretation of the slightly enigmatic *sūtra* 1.2.3 and the two that follow it. The word 'mind-dependent' (*buddhy-apekṣam*) in the *sūtra* has given rise to some speculation among modern interpreters as to whether in the early Vaiśeṣika view universals were mind-dependent. I now believe such an interpretation would be definitely wrong. It is merely the choice of description of the 'objective' universals as 'higher' or 'lower' that is mind-dependent (*buddhy-apekṣa*).

Existent-ness is an awkward expression in English. But I am using it deliberately in this context. For 'existent-ness' is to be distinguished from 'existence', just as the Vaiśeṣika philosophers explicitly and clearly distinguish in Sanskrit between *sattā-sāmānya* (also called *bhāva-sāmānya*) and *svarūpa-sattā*.[2] The three realities, viz. particular substances, quality-particulars, and movements, are regarded as 'existents' or as *real* in the sense that existent-ness as an objective universal is located therein. Of course there are, or may be, many attributes and relations (existent-ness among them) which, if they exist, may be said to have 'existence'. However in the latter cases the use of 'existence' in the place of a property (in expressions like '*x* has

[2] This puzzle with existence is well reflected in the early Vaiśeṣika school. If a set of entities is said to be a set of existents, then it should be distinguished from the set of non-existents by virtue of certain characteristics. If these characteristics are also said to be existent in the same sense, then we need further characteristics to distinguish them. In this way, to avoid infinite regress, another notion of existence is forced upon us. Praśastapāda calls this second notion *svarūpa-sattva* (see Praśastapāda (*Nyāya-kandali*), p. 49). It is also noted here that these characteristics should not be called '*artha*' ('object?'). Candramati separates the category 'existent-ness' from the group of other real universals such as substance-hood and pot-hood (see Candramati, pp. 99–100). They constitute two independent categories in Candramati's list of ten categories.

existence because *x* exists') is vacuous. There is no further (real) property designated by the term 'existence' in such cases. But the use of 'existence' in such cases serves to distinguish a set of items from non-existents such as the winged horse or the rabbit's horn. We can, therefore, say that while existent-ness (*sattā-sāmānya*) is an objectively real universal, according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, *existence* is not so. For according to Nyāya, existence is an *upādhi,* an element of semantic or epistemic analysis, and not an ontological reality. There are of course many knotty philosophical issues lurking within this somewhat problematic theory, but for the moment I bypass those puzzles.

It is argued in the Vaiśeṣika-sūtras that existent-ness is distinct and separate from qualities and actions because it is also *located in* qualities and actions, and by definition (given in lesson one of the *Sūtra*) no further quality can be located in a quality, and no further action in an action. Definitions apart, to say that in the case of a movement no further movement is locatable in it is not entirely counter-intuitive; but in applying the same rule to qualities some clarification is needed.

The Vaiśeṣika *guṇas*, as I have already noted, are a very narrow set of particular instances of qualities. It is necessary to distinguish between what is called a *guṇa* and what is called a *dharma*. In ordinary Sanskrit, the two words are synonymous. (In Abhidharma literature, however, *dharma* is used in a very special sense which we have already discussed in previous chapters.) A quality-particular in the sense of a *guṇa* can be located in only one substance. Just as we cannot say a particular blue-instance has another particular blue-instance in it, we cannot expect that a particular instance of a quality has in it another particular instance of *that* or any other quality. Only in this sense is it said that a *guṇa* does not have a further *guṇa* in it. Obviously there could be properties in *guṇas*, where by 'property' we mean simply a 'feature' or *dharma,* not a Vaiśeṣika *guṇa*. It is important to remember this *guṇa-dharma* distinction for our understanding of the Vaiśeṣika categorial system: *Guṇas* are objective features of substances, real entities (particulars); a *dharma* may be any locatee of a location, either a real or a purported property or a feature.

Actions are also regarded as action-particulars, i.e. instances of movement at every instant or moment. Existent-ness is resident in all action-particulars, quality-particulars and substance-particulars. Since the substratum and what is occurrent in it cannot ordinarily be held to be identical, existentness is distinct from all those existents. Using the same argument substancehood, qualityhood and actionhood are shown

to be distinct from their respective particulars. Substancehood, qualityhood, and actionhood are regarded as objective universals, and they are included under existent-ness. Hence they are now described as 'lower' universals whereas existent-ness is 'higher'. *Sutra* 1.2.4 asserts that existent-ness is 'higher only', it cannot be 'lower' under any circumstances. This only means that it is the highest (objective) universal, under which all 'lower' universals should be included. We should therefore speak of at least four distinct, objectively real, universals. The relation of 'includedness' indicates nothing more than that two or more universals can co-reside in one object provided that they are thus hierarchically related as lower and higher.

The particular is said to 'manifest' or 'reveal' the universal. All universals are regarded as distinct realities having spatial manifestations at different places at the same time. The familiar Buddhist critique of such real universals is absorbed into the system by claiming that the so-called problems are not problems at all but rather answer to the relevant questions. For example, it is pointed out that cowness as an objective universal has to be related to the particular object as soon as a calf is born, and has to disappear from the spatial location as soon as an old cow dies. The well-known verse of Dharmakīrti says that it (cowhood) cannot travel from the former cow to the latter cow, for then the former would not be a cow any longer; nor can it remain stationary, for then the latter cow would not even be a cow (*'Aho vyasana-santatiḥ*' 'And how disastrous the consequences are!').[3] Nyāya in reply says not without a touch of irony, that these are not problems for they simply describe the nature of the universals. They show only that universals are not particulars; they are universals!

Such then is the Vaiśeṣika theory of universals. It includes mainly the natural kinds such as waterhood and cowhood, and the metaphysical kinds, existent-ness, and substancehood. It also includes universals of some artefacts such as pot-hood and cloth-hood. Universals of artefacts are however the most controversial and are not easily defensible. Perhaps, they are not defensible at all. Since the doctrine is primarily based upon the natural kinds, it does not allow criss-crossing or intermixture (*saṁkara*).[4]

Not all general terms yield objective universals. In fact most do not, unless they are in line with what is accepted in the system as the 'natural' classification. The meanings of a large number of general

[3] Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika, Svārthānumāna* ch. 3, verses 152cd and 153ab.
[4] See also B. K. Matilal (1964), pp. 92 f.

terms in our language are construed as *upādhis,* i.e. 'nominal' properties, not objective universals. It is, for example, argued that beasthood is not a universal, i.e. not a real universal. For the application of the general term 'beast' (= *paśu*) to things like cows, lions, and tigers, excluding such things as birds, insects, and humans, is based purely upon the convention of the Sanskrit language facilitated by certain observable features, viz. they must have tails, four legs, etc. Under this theory a real universal cannot be a summation of several essential properties. It has to be unitary, simple, and unanalysable (*akhaṇḍa*).

How does such a theory fare in the perspective of the 'Plato–Aristotle dispute' over the reality of universals? We can now review the situation. Western philosophers generally talk about two kinds of realism in this context, the Platonic and the Aristotelian. Plato's theory of forms has some affinity with the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika universals. Platonic forms as well as Nyāya real universals are separate from, and independent of, the concrete particular things in space and time. (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika would, however, add that space and time too are particular existents, in fact two particular substances! But this point need not detain us here.) For Plato, concrete particulars 'copy' the universals, and universals are denizens of a super-sensible realm. Our souls were acquainted with them before being imprisoned in our bodies, and hence we can recollect or regain a clear knowledge of them. To have such knowledge, however, we need to be sensorily stimulated by being confronted with particulars that 'copy' the form in question. But forms cannot under this theory constitute part of the sensorily given. By contrast, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika universals exist nowhere but in this very world of ours, and particulars do not 'copy' them but 'manifest' them, or allow the universals to *reside* in them. We can say, in accordance with Nyāya, that the particulars provide a 'home' for the universal. The only mystery in this is that when the 'home' is destroyed, the universal is rendered 'homeless'; but it is not destroyed thereby! It maintains a 'homeless', i.e. unmanifest existence. It is spatially locatable and observable, provided the relevant particular is observable. Hence when I see something as a cow, I see both the thing (*piṇḍa*) and the cowhood. Nyāya claims that both the thing (*piṇḍa*) that manifests cowhood and the cowhood that is manifested by the thing may be sensorily given.

It is clear that Nyāya agrees with the Aristotelian type of realism in that it allows the objective universals to reside, i.e. to exist, nowhere else but in the particulars. But this is saying only very little about

Aristotle's variety of realism. Given the details, there will be probably more contrasts than similarities. Nevertheless, the major objection brought against Aristotle's theory can be equally raised against Nyāya. It can be said that such a theory is trying to find an objective basis for some linguistic or epistemic phenomenon (e.g. meanings of general terms, or our analytic understanding of perceptual judgement) that can be better explained otherwise. As the saying goes, universals of this kind are only 'shadows cast by the meanings of general terms'. Our fall into this dubious pit of shadowy entities from the paradise of particulars and reals, can be avoided if we accept some other philosophic explanation. But can this claim be sustained? What about natural kinds? A thoroughgoing ontological nominalism seems to be equally indefensible.

A real universal is briefly defined in Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika as an entity that is one (unitary, indivisible), eternal (timeless, indestructible), and present in many by a single unitary relation called 'inherence' (*samavāya*). This gives one reason why the blue or dark colour of the pot (see Chapter 11.1) is not regarded as a universal. For one can destroy that particular colour without destroying the pot. For example, we can bake the pot in fire, and it will generate a red tinge instead. Therefore what is destroyed here is only the 'seat' or 'home' of the black colour-universal. A universal should be indestructible.

A universal can be located at different (scattered) places, although it is one and the same, just as water can be located at different spatial locations and still be water, the same substance. (This leads to difficulties, but the Aristotelian doctrine shares almost the same difficulties.) The real universals are connected with their particular instances that 'manifest' them. This connection is said to be a single, unitary relation, a real relation called 'inherence' (*samavāya*). It is the same relation which connects the blue-particular to the blue thing, the action-particular to the acting, i.e. moving object, as well as the real or objective universal to the object that instantiates it. I have called it a 'relational universal' in other contexts to convey the idea that it is claimed by Nyāya to be one (*eka*) and non-distinct, although it has manifold manifestation and it connects different types of entities. It is at the same time claimed to be objectively real, although it is not connected with either of its relata by any further *real* relation.[5]

The essential criterion of this relation is enigmatically described as

[5] B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 55–6; also pp. 71–7.

a-yutasiddhi 'the lack of separate viability' or, in some sense, 'inseparability'.[6] This inseparability, however, is unidirectional. It is a permanent relation in which one of the relata cannot exist (cannot obtain its being) without the presence of the other, though the latter can continue without the former. The blue-particular exists only in the pot, but it may be destroyed, while the pot may continue to exist with another colour. The movement will stop, but the ball will still exist. The whole may be destroyed while the parts may still be there. The objective universal is claimed to be in existence even when all its instances may die or cease to exist.

Traditionally, realism about universals has been contested by two other rival doctrines, conceptualism and nominalism. Of these two nominalism seems to be a more clear-cut position, and if it is defensible (as it probably is by combining with some sort of 'resemblance' theory) it offers an alternative to Nyāya realism. In the Indian tradition, such an alternative was provided by the Buddhist *apoha* theory. Conceptualism as a negative doctrine, i.e. as a critique of realism, has its attractions, for it does not countenance abstract universals as real existents. But as a positive doctrine it may be very misleading, for it is not exactly clear what we mean by the term 'concept'. Even when the ambiguity of this crucial term is removed by some reasonable interpretation, the doctrine will still be unacceptable to both the Buddhist and Nyāya.

If the term 'concept' refers to a *clockable* mental occurrence, then it becomes a particular. If a concept becomes a particular as a letter-token in this way, it will not perform the function for which the service of real universals is required in realism. If on the other hand the term 'concept' refers to the concept-type, i.e. the type corresponding to the tokens of mental occurrences, then we are again dealing with universals. There is no reason to believe that this view will fare any better than realism. If 'concept' is the content of some act of conceiving, so to speak, then this may apply to many particulars together. Here again we face the question of how we can talk about such a content? If the so-called content represents certain objective features, then we are brought back to some form of realism; if it represents some intentional object we would possibly have an 'anti-realistic' explanation of generalities (*sāmānya*) as subjective features or sorts of subjective features. But the last interpretation seems only to be

[6] Praśastapāda (*Nyāyakandalī*), p. 37. Śrīdhara's comment, pp. 37–9.

a complementary doctrine to ontological nominalism; otherwise it would hardly be any improvement on strong-headed realism, for it posits intentional objects, which are at least as problem-laden as the real universals.

Nominalism, or ontological nominalism, may be described as that doctrine which strives to uphold the thesis that everything that exists is a particular. In this rigid form, it is hardly defensible. A milder form of nominalism is however recommended by common-sense intuition. For we believe that our 'robust sense of reality' is well satisfied by the existence of particulars, i.e. concrete particulars. We have seen above that Nyāya responds to this common intuition by claiming that all the three sets of particulars, namely substances, particular instances of qualities, and moments of action, constitute the set of *existents* par excellence. Nyāya says that they have existent-ness as their generic feature; that is to say, they are existents in the metaphysically preferred sense. But in saying so, Nyāya has already countenanced the objective universal, *existent-ness.* The moral may be that pure nominalism in the ontologically relevant sense can be a viable doctrine, only if it is tempered with some form of resemblance theory (which can be shown to be only another milder form of realism), or some form of conceptualism, or intentionalism. This, however, does not mean that there is anything wrong with methodological nominalism, which is required in the interest of logic. For in logic it is obviously preferable to work with concrete or identifiable individuals and sets with clearer criteria of identity than any intensional entities like qualities. But ontological realism raises various other issues, some of which we have now noted.[7]

12.2 *Holistic Ontology and Meanings: Bhartṛhari*

We may now look briefly at Bhartṛhari's psychological nominalism or holism as well as Diṅnāga's *apoha* nominalism. It should be emphasized that we are not concerned here with logical manoeuvres that avoid abstract singular terms or intensional objects; plainly, this could be done within limits. Our purpose here is rather to understand and explain what we encounter in experience.

Ontological nominalism maintains that the application of all general terms (our perceptual recognition of a particular under a general concept or a description) is entirely guided by the stipulation of our

[7] See J. L. Mackie's comment, pp. 130–4.

linguistic practices and thoughts. The stronger thesis is that language (as well as what I have called our conception-loaded awareness which is necessarily impregnated with concepts, words etc.) does not show the world or at least does not show the *naked* world without the conceptual clothing, but reveals only what is already ingrained in our thought and hence anticipated by our language.

If nominalism means simply that universals or abstract ideas are dispensable imaginative constructs or *vikalpas*, generated by linguistic practices only, then generally it leads to a vision of the world populated only by particulars or the Buddhist *svalakṣaṇas*. However, there is an alternative. For one might also be a holistic monist, and reject atomism by saying that particulars are also abstractions or are 'falsely' broken or 'extracted' pieces of the indivisible whole. Bhartṛhari was such a holist. He said that words, concepts, and universals are all constructs. Words are abstracted out of whole sentences or sentence-complexes, and similarly concepts are abstracted out of the concrete experience of the whole. This abstraction is done through our inherent faculty of speech-impregnated awareness. The reality is an impartite whole, which we never cognize as such, but always under the *guise* of some words or word-generated concepts. For Bhartṛhari, having a concept and using a word are merely the two sides of a coin. They arise from the same capacity of the mind. Bhartṛhari therefore asserts:

> There is no awareness in this world (*loke*) without its being intertwined with the word. All cognitive comprehension appears to be penetrated as it were, with the word.
>
> If the property of being impregnated with speech (word), which eternally belongs to comprehension, were purged out of it, then (its) illumination would not illuminate [anything]. For this [word-impregnated nature] is the intrinsic (discriminating) activity of consciousness.[8]

These two verses of Bhartṛhari are controversial, and have often been quoted in later philosophical literature. The first part is fairly clear but the latter part is definitely 'obscure'. Neither the *Vṛtti* nor the commentaries are of much help here. My translation is influenced by Abhinava's comment on the second verse.[9]

We must note that Bhartṛhari is not simply repeating a platitude. For instance, most of us may feel that we cannot think without words, for thought is after all, in Plato's language, the 'inner dialogue' of the

[8] Bhartṛhari, ch. I, verses 123–4.
[9] Abhinava Gupta, pp. 182–3. See also S. Iyer's comment, p. 106.

soul. Or, as a modern philosopher, D. Davidson has put it: 'A primitive behaviourism, baffled by the privacy of unspoken thoughts, may take comfort in the view that thinking is really 'talking to oneself'—silent speech.'[10] This platitude leads us to believe that of thought and language, language may be the easier to understand, and hence may be used to explain thoughts. But this assumption is rejected by Bhartṛhari, as well as by Davidson and Quine. For none of these would allow that language has any conceptual priority or privileged position over thought or vice versa. Davidson says, 'the two are indeed linked in the sense that each requires the other in order to be undertstood'. The above two verses of Bhartṛhari show that for him the linkage is essential and fundamental.

Some philosophers make the point that even a purely sensory datum is elusive unless it is reinforced by language. In Quine's words, the point is to show how public language anchors experience, arresting drift.[11] Bhartṛhari's claim is stronger than this. For him, public language anchors experience and public experience anchors language. They are related by way of mutual reinforcement as well as of mutual implication. Bhartṛhari's view is perhaps closer to W. Sellars's 'psychological nominalism': '. . . all awareness of *sorts, resemblances, facts*, etc., in short all awareness of abstract entities—indeed, all awareness even of particulars – is a linguistic affair.'[12]

Bhartṛhari would agree with Sellars that even our awareness of particulars that pertain to the so-called immediate experience is 'intershot' with language. What we call pre-linguistic awareness, the 'raw feels' – pain, the feeling of babies at the sight of their mothers etc. – all are interpenetrated and intertwined with our *ability* to verbalize them, provided this awareness does not exhaust itself in being simply a physical reaction of a body to a stimulus. Bhartṛhari gives an example to convey his point about pre-linguistic awareness. A man walking along a village path to approach his house would invariably touch some grass on the road, and in some sense this would be called his (tactile) awareness, though at a pre-linguistic level.[13] But properly speaking, this will not be an awareness unless and until we combine it with the further ability to sort it out or to verbalize it.[14]

[10] D. Davidson (1975), p. 7.
[11] W. V. Quine (1978), p. 157.
[12] W. Sellars, p. 160.
[13] See *Vṛtti* under verse 123, ch. I of *Vākyapadīya*.
[14] It is for this reason I have argued earlier that the so-called non-epistemic seeing (F. I. Dretske) is an *empty* seeing. Even the baby's seeing, according to Bhartṛhari, is intershot with *implicit* word-capacity.

In propounding his doctrine, Bhartṛhari, unlike Sellars, was not concerned with his attack on the Myth of the Given. For to be attacked the myth has first to be created, but Bhartṛhari preceded both Diṅnāga and Dharmakīrti (who could with some justification be credited with the creation of the Myth of the Given in the Indian context). It seems that Bhartṛhari was concerned with another related myth, if indeed it was a myth. This was the widespread common-sense belief (well articulated by Vātsyāyana) that as far as our cognitive comprehension is concerned language is an inessential detail. Vātsyāyana's remarks are to be found under *Nyāyasūtra* 1.1.4 where he was trying to explain the significance of the expression 'non-verbal' (or 'not verbalizable') (*avyapadeśya*) as a characteristic of perception.

Vātsyāyana compares the sensory perception of two persons, one who has learnt to designate things by words (*gṛhīte'pi ca śabdārthasambandhe*), and the other who lacks this ability. Later commentators mention the mute and the new-born baby as belonging to the second category. Vātsyāyana argues that both the thing and its name jump simultaneously into our awareness, provided we have acquired the right linguistic ability to designate things by the appropriate words. This does not happen to those who lack the linguistic ability of the community, viz. the mute and the baby. Vātsyāyana says that as far as the sense-perception or the 'raw feel' is concerned there should not be any difference between the two. What the baby feels when he gazes at a coloured toy-elephant is the *non-verbal* awareness, i.e. a pre-linguistic awareness, according to Vātsyāyana, but that is nevertheless an *awareness* just as the adult 'raw feel' is.[15]

Vātsyāyana's comments are misleading, if not entirely wrong. This would at least be the view of Bhartṛhari. First, according to Bhartṛhari, the notion of language seems to be confused here with the articulate audible expression of it. Hence it is a false assumption that those who cannot utter appropriate words (because they have not learnt, or cannot learn, to associate the uttered sound with the appropriate thing) have only pre-linguistic or non-linguistic awareness. Second, Vātsyāyana takes for granted the familiar empiricist account of language-learning, which according to Bhartṛhari is also wrong. What Vātsyāyana misses is this. Although there may be pre-linguistic, bare awareness of an object (the baby's *raw feels*), it cannot be simply a 'revelation' (*prakāśa*) without being potent with 'cognitive discrimination' (*pratyavamarśa*).

[15] See also B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 23–4.

At the risk of using metaphysically loaded terms, we may say that for Bhartṛhari the 'revelatory' power of consciousness is not without its 'discriminatory' power for it is initially impregnated with words.

It is one thing to say that whenever we cognize *properly* (i.e. we have an episode of *knowing*, which we place, to use Sellarsian language,[16] 'in the logical space of reasons, of justifying and being able to justify what one says') we invariably verbalize but it is another thing to say that the disposition to verbalize, or for that matter, the *language* itself, is intrinsic to our awareness. Bhartṛhari claims the latter: *no awareness without words.* This is certainly much more than what the pioneer behaviourists, such as John B. Watson, claimed. Their claim was that most thought is simply speech, incipient speech. Several questions arise in this connection. Let us address ourselves to one such question. Assuming that a pre-linguistic awareness arises in us, why can it not be called a *knowing*-episode?

Bhartṛhari, as I have already indicated, considers the familiar case, where we can conceivably have a non-linguistic mental grasp of something. When a man rushes towards his home along the village path and touches grass by his feet, it is undeniable that he is having a tactile sense-impression of some kind. Why does this sense-impression not constitute knowing? Why can it not be called cognitive? asks Bhartṛhari. His first answer, strangely enough, is in agreement with the later Naiyāyikas as well as with the modern behaviourists such as Quine. To bring the point into sharper focus let us use a modern example. Is there any difference between the baby's sensation of blue and the photoelectric cell's 'reading' of blue? Quine has said: 'Descartes supposed that man is the only animal endowed with mind; the others are automata. It is held further, and more widely and on better evidence, that man is the only animal endowed with language.[17] Under such considerations, the raw feels of animals and the baby's sensation of blue would be included under the same group. Quine however might wish to reject any distinction in this respect between creatures with and without mind and might be content with the presence or absence of verbal dispositions in organisms. A disposition for him is simply a physical trait, a configuration of mechanisms. He would therefore be content with regarding the study of mind as simply the study of languages. Thus he continues: 'Now if man is unique in enjoying these two gifts (mind and language), it is no coincidence. One

[16] W. Sellars, p. 169. [17] W. V. Quine (1975), p. 83.

may argue that no mindless creature could cope with so intricate a device as language. Or, one may argue conversely that no appreciable mental activity is conceivable without language aids.'[18]

Bhartṛhari would reject the counter-examples of the *mute's* sensations, a baby's raw feeling, an automaton's reception and discrimination of things, i.e. the cases of non-linguistic reception of objects, by claiming that such instances are either 'not tinged with awareness' because of the lack of language aids or they are also linguistically potent. Bhartṛhari says that some of these cases of awareness are not *effective* enough ('*kāryam na kriyate*'), i.e. that nothing is accomplished by them. In other words, they do not constitute 'appreciable' mental activities. For Sellars, they are not 'in the logical space of reason'. This coincidence seems interesting when we see that the philosophic motivation of Bhartṛhari is diametrically opposite to that of Quine and Sellars.

For a similar reason, Bhartṛhari's partial agreement with Uddyotakara (about purely sensory reaction) is interesting. For Uddyotakara the physical connection between sense and object, the fact of my sense-faculty's reaction to the coloured opaque surface of the red ball, may be the *causal* ground for generating the proper cognitive sensation of the ball itself (the 'whole' material object). It is not, however, the *inferential* ground for being aware that a red ball is there. Machines may discriminate because of the difference in stimuli they receive from objects (i.e. difference in stimuli causes difference in responses) but they do not infer, so far as Uddyotakara would appear to believe.

Bhartṛhari is not entirely satisfied with the above answer to the counter-example of pre-linguistic awareness. He therefore goes on to argue that even in the pre-linguistic cognitive state, should it exist, there lies a speech-latency, i.e., a completely inert speech in latent form. In other words, if it is cognitive, then it has speech-potential. The speech-potency is an essential trait of human consciousness. Even babies would have it. Bhartṛhari even suggests that animals may also have it: 'This [speech-potential] is certainly the consciousness of all beings; it exists within and without. The awareness ('sentience') of all [sentient] beings does not transgress this [speech-potency].'[19] This speech-potency is Bhartṛhari's substitute for what is called 'verbal disposition'. It is true that Bhartṛhari from his Hindu or Indian religious background identifies it with the residual traces of experiences

[18] W. V. Quine, Ibid., p. 83.

[19] Bhartṛhari, ch. I, verse 126.

of previous births from beginningless time: 'All knowledge of what is to be done in this world depends upon the *word* [language, the speech-potential]. Even the child, with the residual traces from previous births, has such knowledge.'[20] We may be indifferent to the Indian hypothesis of transmigration, but the point still remains. From the Christian background, Descartes would have said that mind and language are two essential gifts of God to humans. From the non-religious point of view, and being less charitable to animals, one could still claim that verbal disposition is an intrinsic trait of the humans, for it is an inalienable part of their cognitive faculty. This is the position that Bhartṛhari is trying to defend.

For Bhartṛhari, the speech-potency (*śábda-bhāvanā*)[21] is the cause, of which the effect is audible speech. This audible speech is what we generally call verbal language (*bhāṣā*). The mute person possesses the former, not the latter. Hence his sensory awareness is not pre-linguistic. In conception-free awareness of adults the speech-potency is latent. Bhartṛhari continues:

> When everything is (indistinguishably) merged in the speech-potency, no verbal usage can be accomplished in such conception-free awareness. . . . Just as illumination is the nature of fire, just as consciousness is the nature of the mind, likewise speech-potency is the nature of each awareness. Even in an unconscious state (e.g. in sleep), there is persistence of the association with subtle speech-form. Also, such first (sensory) awareness of the external objects as does not grasp any special features of them, illuminates them in a non-specific manner as mere things by such expressions as 'this' or 'that'.[22]

Bhartṛhari argues that even in the cognitive episode called remembrance overt speech activities are sometimes submerged into the latent, very inexplicit, speech-potency. For we do experience sometimes that we cannot recollect a verse which we have heard or read and hence it must be present in our memory store (moderners would say 'coded in our brain') for recollection. We only feel in the circumstances that we have heard the verse which we cannot recollect. We must say therefore that the entire verse exists in our cognitive faculty in the form of a *seed* (*word-seed*) or speech-potency, but because of the lack of other contributory factors verbalization or actualization of the speech has not taken place. This is the argument for positing the presence of the verbal disposition or the speech-seed even in the so-called pre-linguistic awareness of babies and mutes.

[20] Ibid., verse 121. [21] S. Iyer, pp. 91–3, 103 f.
[22] Bhartṛhari, ch. I, *vṛtti* under verses 123 and 124.

Bhartṛhari's holism requires that words are only abstractions from sentences just as the letters are abstractions from the words. In fact sentences are also abstractions from the discourse in which they are embedded, and even discourses may be embedded in larger discourses. By what is called the *apoddhāra* method, that is, the 'process of constant and progressive extraction, comparison, analysis, and abstraction', we extract parts or pieces, turn them into separate wholes and assign 'metaphorical existence' to them (*upacāra-sattā*). In other words, we create 'abstract' entities from the given *concrete* whole by breaking it to pieces and then we reify them. For the sake of convenience, however, Bhartṛhari continues his discussion about language and meaning, treating words as wholes (unless it becomes misleading in certain contexts), and I shall follow this practice. It is said by Bhartṛhari: 'Linguists (*śabdavidaḥ*) have regarded two categories of language-sound (i.e. significant language-word). One is the causal ground for the audible noises (utterances of words) while the other is applied to meaning/object'.[23]

It is conventional to regard language or words as a string of types of sound to which meanings are assigned. For example, a language may be tentatively defined as 'a function or a set or ordered pairs of strings and meaning'.[24] Bhartṛhari will say that it is our pre-critical habit to regard the string of sounds as expressing a meaning or having a meaning. The 'real language', i.e. the 'real word', is certainly different from the audible noise that expresses it. (For the sake of convenience I shall call the *sphoṭa* of Bhartṛhari the 'real word' or 'the real language'.) It is even different from the types of universals of sound-strings or noise-strings. One may say that the real word is *inside* the speaker while the audible noise constitutes its external expression or its conveyor belt. The real word is 'inside' but it is not the speaker's private property, i.e. completely shut out from everybody else. Unlike his private sensation of pain, the real word, is both inside the speaker and also inside everybody else. It is inside them in an unchanged form, it is intersubjectively accessible, publicly available for communication. The audible language is variant, while the real language (the *sphoṭa*) is invariant.

The noise-string that we call a word (say, C–A–T) that has a definite sequence, but the real word (the *sphoṭa*) has no sequence. It is

[23] This is another enigmatic verse of Bhartṛhari. *Vākyapadīya* I, verse 44. See G. Sastri for various explanations from different commentaries, p. 90; also S. Iyer, pp. 152 f.

[24] For example, see D. Lewis, p. 253.

sequenceless and partless. It is found in all human beings, babies and mutes alike. The ancient linguists, according to Bhartṛhari, recognized both the 'real word' and the audible noise. From the point of view of the speaker, the real word in the speaker is the 'causal ground' (*nimitta*) for the audible noise, and it is the audible noise which conveys the meaning (*artha*). From the hearer's point of view, however, it is the reverse; the audible sequential sound-string is the causal ground (*nimitta*) of the real word (i.e. for the understanding of the real word that is within him), and the real word in its turn is the conveyor of the meaning (I follow here the Sanskrit interpretation of Sūryanārāyaṇa Śukla of the above verse). When a speaker intends to convey a thought or refer to an object, he requisitions the service of what I have called the conveyor belt, i.e. appropriate strings of types of sound which *express*, reveal or lay bare the real word (or the real sentence) to the hearer; the real word thus revealed conveys to the hearer the intended thought or object. The audible noise-string is *physically* produced in many ways by various agents, learned men with good pronunciation, persons with defective pronunciation, parrots, etc. Hence it is claimed that the audible physical reality is variant. But the real word expressed is invariant. Bhartṛhari's metaphysical position envisages one undifferentiated reality, the *whole*. Hence it is a form of monism. But sometimes he also adopts a phenomenalistic stance. An ordinary object, Bhartṛhari would say, is never given to us in its nakedness. It is always captured by our mind under some guise or some mode of presentation. Verbalization makes this guise explicit. This is the 'cloak of word' which the object puts on as it were to hide its nakedness. (Mystical insight lifts this cloak to see the naked reality, but we need not go into that doctrine for our purpose here.) In fact, this guise is not germane to the object, and there are, to be sure, an infinite number of guises or *vikalpas*, since there are infinitely many ways of describing the object in language. We perceive the objects under some guises or concepts or *vikalpas* and articulate them in speech. The word therefore must refer to the object itself, but not without the intermediary of *vikalpas* or guises. The *vikalpas* or guises are no doubt connected with the speaker's intention, but they are not entirely his private properties. Since they are essentially word generated and also to be identified as such, they are publicly sharable.

Bhartṛhari uses here the analogy of the crystal. The crystal, much as the real object, never appears without reflecting some particular colour-shade or other, and we identify it as *red*, *blue* or whatever. The

object is colourless like the 'crystal', i.e. guiseless or *vikalpa*-less. But we identify it as a cow, as white, as Śābaleya or whatever. In each case it is the attribution or superimposition of word-generated guises. In the *Jātisamuddeśa* of the *Vākyapadīya*, Bhartṛhari explains how we need not admit any real 'thing-universal' (*arthajāti*) over and above the universals of different individual words.[25] The utterance of the word 'cow' gives us the universal of the word 'cow'. Notice that this universal is not manifested in the sound token C or O or W individually, but in the whole token 'cow' when it is viewed as an indivisible partless token. This whole sound-token manifests for the Vaiśeṣikas, who admit real universals, the universal of sound (soundhood), qualityhood as well as existent-ness. But all these three are being manifested also by the elemental sound-tokens, C, O and W. Thus, to regard the token 'cow' as a sequence-less (*akrama*), partless whole, is to countenance already an abstract non-particular entity.

Bhartṛhari believes that this universal of the word 'cow' is transformed into (*vivartate arthabhāvena*) a thing-universal which we call cowhood. This cowhood, then, is the guise which is attributed to, or superimposed upon, the external object, just as a particular shade of blue colour is reflected in a crystal. In effect, we identify the object as a cow. However, the crucial point here is that the concepts are in fact *generated* by words. Here, generation is to be understood as transformation; words are *transformed* into objects. In Indian tradition, some philosophers regard transformation as a real change (*pariṇāma*), i.e. the effect becomes something different from the material cause; others think that transformation is only an apparent or illusory change of feature (*vivarta*), i.e. the effect remains non-distinct from the material cause. If Bhartṛhari accepts the latter theory, the thing-universal cowhood is only a different guise of the word universal, i.e. the universal of the word 'cow'. There is strong evidence to believe that Bhartṛhari held the latter view of transformation, although on occasions he tries to maintain a neutrality between the two.[26] In any case, Bhartṛhari comes here very close to accepting a sort of nominalism, which maintains that words are the only universals that may exist, the thing-universals being only word-generated illusions. This consideration justifies also my previous comment that according to this style of philosophizing, there is not a great deal of difference

[25] Bhartṛhari, ch. III, *Jātisamuddeśa*, verses 6–8. See R. Herzberger, Toronto Dissertation.)

[26] See S. Iyer, pp. 33 f. and 130 f.

between words and concepts. They are, as I have said, two sides of the same coin.

In the light of the above discussion, we may state Bhartṛhari's solution of some problems of meaning. Roughly and briefly, the doctrine is that languages i.e. the 'bits of language' *create*, each of them, their own meanings. These meanings are guises of the world or something subjectively broken, bits or pieces of the world, which is in fact indivisible, partless, and wholly given. Hence when I utter a 'bit' of language and by it *refer* to a bit of the world, that bit is already an abstraction and hence must have only what Bhartṛhari would call a *metaphorical* existence rather than *real* existence. Bhartṛhari's holism already demands a double-standard, i.e. a theory of twofold existence, principal existence (*mukhya-sattā*), and metaphorical existence (*upacara-sattā*), reminiscent of the Buddhist distinction of real and nominal existence.

When we employ in our speech new 'bits of language', we generate new 'bits' of entities which are invested with 'metaphorical existence'. We can therefore say that some entities like Pegasus and unicorns do not exist, without thereby becoming involved in any paradoxical results, i.e. the problem that is sometimes typified by the expression 'Plato's beard'. We can even say that their non-existence exists. For in each case the subject term to which the predicate expressions such as '. . . is existent' or '. . . is non-existent' is applied would refer, in Bhartṛhari's view, to an entity to which we have already attached (by our presupposition, so to speak) a metaphorical existence. The robust intuition that we cannot affirm or deny anything *about* a non-existent entity is thereby explained. Bhartṛhari says that each substantival expression in language can refer to a 'metaphorical substance' generated by the word itself. Obviously, a metaphorical substance is a notion that is parasitical upon that of some non-metaphorical, real substance. Therefore it allows that at least one substance is there, and is referred to non-metaphorically.[27]

Quine has said, 'You and I never confuse physical things with their names, but primitive peoples do view the name as somehow the soul or the essence of the thing.'[28] What Quine has called the confusion of sign and object is, according to him, coeval with language. He

[27] On the notion of metaphorical existence see R. Herzberger's forthcoming book (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto). On Bhartṛhari's view about the non-existents, see A. Chakrabarti, (1982), Appendix.

[28] W. V. Quine (1975), p. 50.

concedes however that this tendency to confuse sign and object might have initially facilitated the development of language, which involves 'the strategem of letting words stand for things'. The question is whether this is really a confusion or a fusion. Bhartṛhari regards words and meanings as being initially non-distinct in our awareness prior to speech. They become split or separated as we articulate the word in the acoustic blast which conveys the meaning for the hearer to grasp. It illuminates (like a lamp) the meaning for the hearer to grasp, and then it becomes *superimposed* and *identified* with the thing, i.e. the external thing. It is certainly no 'sin' (*par contra* Quine) to say that this IS Sābaleya or this IS a cow (using both cases of IS as the IS of identity) instead of saying, 'This is whose name is Śābaleya', or 'This is whom we call a member of the cow-class', or something of the kind. This *fusion* of sign and object constitutes an important part of what language actually is. According to Bhartṛhari, it is called *attributive* identification or identification through attribution or superimposition (cf. *adhyavasāya*).[29]

The so-called confusion between sign and object might have given the false impression that there must be abstract entites such as roundness or circularity, and a physicalist like Quine cannot admit such entities. They are rightly described by Quine as intensional objects or, as in the view of Anscombe regarding the origin of the word 'intentional', intentional objects.[30] But the relevant point of Bhartṛhari's view is that this is a consciously perpetrated fusion and not an unwittingly engendered confusion. It would be a confusion if we were to ascribe existent-ness to both roundness and the round ball lying over there. Bhartṛhari would assign only a metaphorical existence to roundness, so that the word 'roundness' would have some reference. To parody another image of Quine, meaning for Bhartṛhari is not 'divorced from the thing and wedded to the word' but rather the reverse. Meaning is divorced from the word, the real word (*sphoṭa*), through our verbal behaviour and 'remarried' to the thing, i.e. *attributively* identified with the thing.

We may call the process metaphorical designation or identification through metaphorical superimposition. Bhartṛhari gives the example of an ordinary metaphor to illustrate his point. Referring to an energetic boy one may say, 'That boy is a tiger'. Here the boy is designated through metaphor as a tiger. We certainly do not think that tigerhood or the essence of a tiger is identical with the essence of the

[29] See Helārāja's comment under Bhartṛhari, ch. III, *Jātisamuddeśa*, verse 6.
[30] G. E. M. Anscombe, II. p. 4.

boy in the case under consideration. But we superimpose some tiger-like qualities upon the boy, and wilfully call him a tiger. Similarly, by calling a thing 'a cow' we simply superimpose the word-universal 'cow', or its transformation, the thing-universal *cowhood*, upon the thing (*piṇḍa*) and thereby through metaphor designate it as a cow. Helārāja commenting on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* says that the only difference between this case and the ordinary metaphor ('the boy is a tiger') is a difference in effort; in applying the word 'cow' to a cow we make less effort than in describing the boy as a tiger (in ordinary metaphor). Hence the former seems more natural to us while the latter somewhat artificial.

Bhartṛhari would therefore consider it a confusion to think that at least some words (for instance, proper names), directly *mean* i.e. refer to, concrete things such as a man. For no word *directly* means the external reality. Words directly refer to, i.e. mean, metaphorically existent entities, which are then rightly or wrongly identified with external realities. Notice also that the ordinarily understood concrete entity such as a man or a table is, for Bhartṛhari, already an abstraction, for it is severed from the total reality and is being considered in isolation. This apparently fosters the metaphorical identification of the intentional with the so-called extensional or external.

12.3 Apoha *and Natural Kinds*

Our brief survey of the problem of universals in classical India cannot be complete without a reference to Diṅnāga's *apoha* doctrine. Diṅnāga agreed with what we may call the Bhartṛhari thesis: the ultimate (real) object never appears without any guise or *vikalpa*, and is invariably grasped under some guise or mode of presentation. But the major disagreement with Bhartṛhari probably lies in Diṅnāga's view that the *naked* object can be grasped or is grasped by our purely sensory awareness, and the pure percept is therefore ineffable (*anirdeśya*) and self-cognized (*sva-saṃvedya*). In this respect Diṅnāga was closer to the sense-datum philosophers. For him, the percepts are pure data free from any *vikalpa* or conception, while the guises or the words/concepts are extraneous to the pure data. Diṅnāga was an atomist while Bhartṛhari was a holist.

In Diṅnaga's phenomenalism objects are in fact unique particulars which are infinitely propertied (see *dharmiṇo 'nekarūpatvāt*, also '*dharmiṇo'nekarūpatā*', Dharmakīrti). But these properties or guises are not ontological; they are not resident in the object but superimposed by

by the mind on the object or conceptually constructed. For example, a particular comes to be recognized as blue only when it is excluded from non-blue things, and this process of exclusion is certainly a contribution of the mind or thought which we call *vikalpa* or conceptual construction. In the same manner, the same particular may be recognized as being of round shape or as being *P* or *Q* according as it is excluded from non-round-shaped things, or non-Ps, non-Qs, etc. This is how the particular appears as infinitely propertied or under infinitely many guises. If, as Bhartṛhari has argued, the concepts or universals are only superimposed guises or cloaks on the object, then Diṅnāga offers here an explication of the guise or *vikalpa*. The guises are all *apoha*. 'The word means a concept or a universal' would in Diṅnāga's language be read as 'the word *excludes*'. By using the word 'pain' or 'cow', the speaker does not say, in this theory, 'What *X* is like' or even, 'What sort of thing an *X* is', but only 'What sorts of things the *X* is not', or 'What *X* is not like.'

The usual question 'What is the mening of "cow"?' may cause us to suppose that there is some entity which answers to the description, 'the meaning of "cow"'. This is highly misleading. A satisfactory theory of meaning should be able to explain how we are able to apply the term 'cow' to just those things which are cows. According to the Buddhists, the *apoha* theory can do just this without admitting real universals in their ontology.

We may briefly state the *apoha* account in this way. Given any general term such as 'cow' (or even a singular term 'Sābaleya'), we can formulate an 'exclusion' class, members of which reject the description 'cow' outright. Let us call it 'woc' (for Śābaleya' formulate 'Ayelabas'). We now have 'no cow is woc', and for Śābaleya we have 'Sabaleya is not ayelabas'. We may still seem to be dealing with such properties as the lack of being woc or the lack of being ayelabas. For we may try to attach them to the particular. But this would misrepresent the Buddhist intention. The Buddhist (e.g. Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla) claims that the negatives in the above two sentences express *prasajya-pratiṣedha* or an 'exclusion' negation. I have called this a verbally bound negative, following the Sanskrit grammarians. It is comparable with the illocutionary negation in the speech-act theory of Searle.[31] The negating act simply rejects the suggestion (cf. *prasaṅga*) that the particular concerned ('this') may be or might have been *woc*. It does not

[31] J. Searle, pp. 32–3. For a criticism of my previous view see B. Gillon (forthcoming).

impute anything positively! This is how the Buddhist might claim that the particular is at least not deemed to be positively characterized by putative properties like the lack of being woc, or the lack of being ayelabas.[32]

Let us suppose the world is populated with six particulars, three cows, two horses, and a cat (all considered simples). Each of them will have six corresponding mental representations (*pratibhāsa*): r Cow 1, r Cow 2, r Cow 3, r Horse 1, r Horse 2, and r Cat. Now for each representation we can find the corresponding exclusion class. It is observed that for each of the first three representations, we have the identical exclusion class: r Horse 1, r Horse 2, r Cat. Ordinarily we would say each mental representation of a cow excludes all 'non-cow' mental representations. Because of the extensional identity of the first three representations, we can regard them as merely tokens of one and the same type of mental representation. But this commonness in type, the *apoha* theorists argue, is not so much due to the presence of any identical property in those cow-particulars as it is due to the commonness of their 'exclusion' class. Alternatively, we may say that such commonness is more due to our consideration about what other possible representations it could have had but has now excluded. This seems to be the import of 'exclusion negation' with regard to the mental representation as noted by Śāntarakṣita. The commonness of mental representations, it is argued, is not connected with any real thing in the world populated only with particulars, but rather it is due to how the world is represented or captured or conceived in our language, in our system of guises, or concepts, or words. (See M. Siderits in note 32.)

An example is cited by Śāntarakṣita to illustrate this point. It is observed that ingestion of any one of the three plants *abhayā*, *dhatrī*, and *harītakī*, causes abatement of fever. This might lead us to believe falsely that there must be some common property present in these distinct plants. All we are warranted to assume here is that in each case the 'occasion' sentence 'this cures fever' has been true and therefore there have been identical mental representations of the property of curing fever. But this recurring mental representation, the *apoha* theorists argue, is simply due to the identity of its exclusion class, the class of all properties of not curing fever. For the sake of argument we have to assume here that the three plants mentioned cure fever for

[32] For more on this, see B. K. Matilal (1971), pp. 39–46; R. Hayes, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Toronto, 1982; and M. Siderits (1982).

three different reasons. The point is that the search for an objective common character or universal is to be regarded as initially impossible in this case. The common character 'cures fever' is in the mental representations or in language, not in the world.[33]

It is, however, not absolutely clear whether the *apoha* doctrine completely succeeds in rejecting all real universals. For it seems to be supported indirectly by some notion of 'resemblance' or types of mental representations. Kumārila in his critique of the doctrine has raised many objections, one of which we may note in this connection. He says that if our understanding of the meaning of 'cow' is derived from the exclusion of those things which are not cows (wocs), then we should have some principle of distinguishing between cows and non-cows at our disposal. If the principle cannot be formulated in terms of similarities among those particulars that are cows or are called cows, then we should be able to recognize similarities among wocs, i.e. particulars that are not cows. In other words, the 'exclusion' class should at least be recognized as the 'exclusion' class for 'cow' on the basis of some form of universal.

Here I shall concentrate on one point from Śāntarakṣita's elaborate reply to this objection. Each of the mental representations of cow-particulars in our little universe of six particulars, i.e. any one of r Cow 1, r Cow 2, and r Cow 3, by its very nature excludes the representations which are not itself, except that it cannot exclude the other two cow-representations. It is emphasized that we do not have to know each member of the exclusion class, but simply understand that there are representations which are excluded. They are excluded because they are non-identical with this representation. This is supposed to show that we need not know the common property of the exclusion class of mental representations, for the particular representation itself, say r Cow 1, is capable of generating the exclusion class for us. If this answer is satisfactory then we have to admit that the *apoha* doctrine has avoided positing real univerals. But I think there is still an implicit or tacit use of the notion of the *type* of mental representations without which the doctrine would lose its full explanatory power. Elsewhere I have tried to defend the *apoha* doctrine on the basis of many other considerations, which I do not wish to repeat here. The *apoha* doctrine was indeed a novel way of treating the problem of universals in the

[33] Śāntarakṣita, verses 1004–5. Modern medics may reject the example. For it may be argued that the three plants have some common ingredient which cures fever. But the point remains.

Indian context; a thorough analysis of a number of authors who dealt with the doctrine for several centuries would indeed be a desirable course of research.[34]

It may be claimed that the Nyāya distinction between *jāti* (real universal) and *upādhi* (nominal universal) is akin to the modern debate over nominal universal and natural kind terms. In fact, I believe the Nyāya doctrine of real objective universal can be reinterpreted, in essential respects, as a doctrine of natural kinds. If we avoid the details, such a reinterpretation would seem plausible. This can be shown by referring to one of the Buddhist objections to the objective universals and Uddyotakara's reply to such an objection. The general point is that a great majority of abstract terms are not regarded in Nyāya as names of objective universals but are treated as naming *upādhis*, which we may translate as 'nominal essences' or 'conditional or subjectively imposed properties'.

The general distinction between nominal and real essence was introduced by Locke as a reaction to the scholastic or Aristotelian view of essences. This distinction has recently been revived in a much modified form by Saul Kripke and others. In the Indian context, however, the distinction between real and subjective universals was present even in the early Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika formulation of the doctrine of *sāmānya*, and it was clearly articulated as early as the time of Uddyotakara. If by 'nominal essences' we mean properties of our own making or word-generated properties, while by 'real essences' we mean those universals which *naturally* exist in things themselves, then my use of such terms as nominal properties for *upādhis* and real or objective universal for *jāti* would be quite correct. (In ordinary Sanskrit, *jāti* is the closest term that we can get as a translation for 'natural kinds'; but this is probably not important.) The typical example of an *upādhi* will only support our rendering it as a nominal or conditional property. A crystal appears red because of the red rose that is lying near it. But this redness cannot be the essential property of the crystal. Our awareness of it as red (verbalized as 'This is red') should be explained by analysing the redness as a 'condition' or a nominal property.

The Buddhist argues that if most abstract singular terms formed

[34] Recently several scholars have discussed this intriguing problem in a symposium at Oxford. An anthology with the papers presented is in the press (under the editorship of the present author): *Buddhist logic and Epistemology* (D. Reidel, forthcoming in *Studies of Classical India series*).

from general terms such as 'cook' and 'servant' do not name objective universals, why can we not treat such words as 'cow' or 'man' in the same way? Uddyotakara answers that obviously not all general terms generate objective universals, for not all cases of our awareness of commonness are based upon some objective and natural property.[35] Our awareness of 'commonness', which prompts us to use a common name, needs to have some *basis*. But this basis need not be in all cases a recognition or perception of some objective property or real universal (*jāti*). If I give everybody in this room a straw hat and then call each a straw-hatted person, I am not talking about an abstract universal property straw-hatted-ness, which would present ontological problems. The nominally constructed property of being a straw-hatted person is applicable to a number of individuals, or, to use the terminological convention of modern logic, the predicate '. . . has a straw hat on his head' is *true of* many persons and *false of* others. Ontologically, however, there is nothing there except a number of individual hats situated on the heads of a number of persons. Similarly a number of persons are called cooks or servants, as the case may be, because they perform certain functions or acts from time to time, and hence in analysing the meaning of such terms we need not countenance some abstract universal property which may be considered real. The problem, of course, arises in the case of relation or connection between particulars which we use in constructing the nominal properties. For example, in the above instance, Uddyotakara regards the physical contact between the particular hat and the particular man as another particular (a *saṃyoga*), but then some objective universal contact-hood (*saṃyogatva*) is posited to account for the use of the common term 'contact' (= saṃyoga).

Uddyotakara argues that the cases of cowhood etc. are different from the examples given above. Here it is intuitively simpler to talk about a further unanalysable, irreducible, and simple property, a universal essence, cowhood, which is the necessary property to make a cow a cow. Natural kind terms are therefore based (in the Nyāya theory) upon objective univerals, which are simple, unitary, and unanalysable. Certain artefacts, such as pots and cloths, are also treated on a par with the natural kind terms or metaphysical terms such as a substance. But we may ignore this part of the doctrine for the moment. The argument for the natural kind terms will still be the same.

35 Uddyotakara under NS 2.2.65. See Uddyotakara (B), p. 317.

12.4 Mentalism and Realism

Let us briefly address ourselves to the problem of mental objects. I have already suggested, in developing the Nyāya theory of mental entity or rather mental episode, that we do not need an act–object theory—a theory that may lead to the phenomenological issues of the Brentano–Husserl kind. One may of course take that line with interesting results, but I wish to avoid it in the present context. For as it stands there is little philosophical 'bite' in the claim that if there are psychological or mental episodes in the way I have argued following Nyāya, then there will *exist* objects 'intended' by those episodes. These 'objects', let us say, are not independent of the episodes that 'intend' them or *have* them, and last only as long as the episodes last. They may or may not represent actual external objects. If we do not claim existence of these objects independently of the mental episodes that are connected with them, then objections to such mental objects would by and large be answered. We separate the objects from the relevant episodes in our thought-analysis, but they need not be regarded as ontologically separate.

Some representationalists claim that the sense-data, the immediate objects of visual perception, are mental objects and these mental objects are primarily coloured shapes.[36] Notice that the mental objects of the kind described in the preceding paragraph would not be 'coloured shapes' in any sense. Nor are they regarded as the immediate objects of visual perception. Another suggestion comes from G. E. M. Anscombe, who says that we may avoid many problems connected with sense-data if we keep in mind the intentionality of sensation. This line of inquiry seems more fruitful from our point of view provided we can make some sense of the intentional objects. Nyāya would seem more inclined to accept the intentionality of sensation than the above explanation of sense-data as mental entities having coloured shapes. The idea here is, roughly, to distinguish between two senses of the verb 'see', between the intentional use of seeing which takes an intentional object and the material use of seeing which takes a material object ('I see a shiny blur', and 'He did not see a lion for there was no lion there to be seen'). As against the sense-datum, Professor Anscombe suggests that there must always be an intentional object of seeing, but there need not always be a material object.[37] This follows

[36] F. Jackson, pp. 120–37.

[37] G. E. M. Anscombe, pp. 12–20. See specially p. 17.

from the fact that the material use implies some intentional use of seeing, while the converse is not true.

Here we reach the crucial point. If there are intentional objects of seeing where there are no material objects to be seen, then we encounter a conflict between two different sorts of common-sense intuition: one recommends (as the epistemologists have done) the epistemological priority of intentional seeing, while the other says that we cannot describe or verbalize any object of sight without using some material object language. Quine has sometimes said of the sense-data philosophers that they take sidelong glances at the material object language in order to describe their sense-data. Anscombe, of course, wants to resolve the conflict 'by allowing that an intentional object is necessarily involved in seeing, while granting that this does not confer epistemological priority on purely intentional sentences, which indeed, in a host of the most ordinary cases of reported seeing, are never formulated or considered' (p. 17).

A follower of Buddhism might say here that the 'object of sight' is in fact theoretically non-verbalizable, and hence the epistemological priority of the intentional sensing need not be sacrificed on this ground. If this is allowed in the Buddhist system, it would of course imply that all *svalakṣaṇas*, the immediate objects of perception for Diṅnāga, would have to be counted as intentional objects–a consequence that may not be unwelcome to a Yogācārin, though a Sautrāntika may not agree with this view.

From the Nyāya point of view, Anscombe's suggestion seems only partially acceptable. The epistemological priority of the intentional seeing, or of 'purely intentional sentences' for that matter, need not always be granted. But the question is how to avoid granting it when the above implication (and not its converse) holds. For we have allowed that the material use of 'seeing' implies an intentional use in some way or other, but the intentional use does not always imply the material use. In fact the sense-data philosophers would love to regard this point as only a preliminary to the acceptance of sense-data as mental entities (as Jackson had argued). Nyāya would allow not only the above implication but also its converse. There is always some material object at the end of the line, near or far, present or past, in any so-called intentional use of seeing. In some cases, the so-called intentional object is identifiable as part of the physical world. The 'shiny blur', for example, ('I see a shiny blur' said when there is a watch there) belongs, if not in the watch itself, in the physical world situation, distance,

lighting arrangements, my poor eyesight, etc. In such cases, I believe, it is possible to say that the intentional object coincides with the physical/material object or at least with the *observable* physical property of the material object or the material world. (See Chapters 6.5 and 6.6, the distinction between primary and secondary qualities may be regarded as immaterial here.) Sometimes what is *seen* can be presented through expectancy and memory traces fragmented from past experiences. That is how I see a snake where there is a rope there. The intentional object here has something to do with the retentive quality of our cognitive faculty. But it is all derivable initially from the material/physical world. This also explains why we always use material object language to describe the intentional object. A stronger Nyāya thesis would be: all intentional objects are parasitical upon actual objects. They owe their origin to the objects of the actual world, our experiences of them, bits and pieces of our memory-traces and the 'creative'/manipulative quality of our cognitive faculty. (See also Chapter 6.6).

The notion of mental episodes having *intention* would be compatible with other available alternatives to the sense-data theory, viz. the 'state' theory and the adverbial theory, if suitable modifications are made. But it would not be compatible with the sense-data theory, which claims all sense-data to be mental existents having physical-object properties such as colours and shapes.

Much of the 'state-of-the-person' analysis of sense-data would be acceptable to a Nyāya realist. It is claimed for example that although pain, pleasure, and any particular sensation (sensory awareness, in our terminology) of a certain description, may exist (i.e. they happen), their existence is not independent of the persons who *have* them. It is therefore advisable to treat them as conditions or states of the person having them. This would be like treating 'predicates' or 'general terms' in the quantification theory in Quinian fashion: predicates such as '. . . is an *F*' or '. . . is *F*' are *true* or *false of* objects, but they do not themselves refer to any objects. (We ignore for the moment the idea of the Fregean semantics that the predicates refer to 'concepts'.) In other words, it is a proposal to switch from our talk about sense-data to our talk about the condition or state or property of the person having the sensory experience. These properties or conditions are presumably temporary properties, and hence they are close analogues of the episodes of sensory awareness that concern Naiyāyikas and other Indian philosophers. This line of argument may be slightly misleading.

For the 'state' theorists generally lean towards physicalism and behaviourism, and hence they would talk *about* the person (the 'thing') and not the episodic property we call sensory awareness, except for its behavioural (bodily?) concomitant. In any case, these theorists in this way avoid dealing with the extremely elusive entities called sense-data. As I have already noted, since Nyāya is not strictly committed to the Cartesian dualism, a milder form of behaviourism will be compatible with Nyāya.

The adverbial theorists use almost the same philosophic insight and propose to talk about actions such as sensing where the 'objects' or sense-data appear only as adverbial modifiers. They are rather modes or features of what the sensory verbs denote. Thus, instead of speaking of such sense-data as 'a shiny blur' or 'a red after-image', i.e. instead of a sense-datum of a certain description *F*, we should speak as follows: I am sensing *F*-ly. In the 'state' theory, however, any ascription of properties to sensations (properties by which we describe those sensations, and which thus become the sense-datum in the 'sense-data' theory) is to be taken simply as part of the ascription of other attributes to the person who has them—as specifying those attributes. I think the 'state' theory follows the 'adjectival' models while the present theory follows the 'adverbial' models for explaining away the terms for sense-data. It is not clear, however, what would be the concept of the person in either theory. Would it be a 'bundle' concept of the Buddhist or the Humean variety, or a 'physical' concept of the kind preferred by behaviourism, or an independent substance as Cartesianism endorses? I do not wish to enter here into this intricate question.

The Nyāya model is slightly different. The sensory awareness as an episode is different from the person having it in much the same way as it has been traditionally claimed that movements are different from the things that move. In the Buddhist model, however, there is no such thing as a person apart from awareness episodes, memory, etc. Hence the question of distinguishing the sensations from the person having them does not arise.

Taking some licence as an interpreter, I wish to argue that the object of sensory awareness in Nyāya is both an intentional object (in the way Professor Anscombe has argued) and a material object. Rather it is an intentional object (in the sense I shall describe presently) which has a material-object foundation. The 'shiny blur' that I see is not something in my head, however. It is *caused* entirely by the situation that obtains in

the physical, external world, much in the same way as the yellow of a jaundiced eye is seen in a white conch-shell. I am calling the object intentional simply because it is not present in the place where psychological verbs impute it, e.g. in the conch-shell. A material object cannot be so, for it has to be there where the verb of seeing applies, e.g. the conch-shell itself. But for each intentional object a causal explanation is possible and this explanation will reveal its foundation in some material object or other. For example, the shiny blur is locatable in the combination of weak eyesight, poor light conditions, etc. The oasis in my mirage illusion is locatable in my memory, i.e. in a number of objects of my past experiences of oases or water, while a number of properties of the oasis would be located in the physical situation itself: hot sun, hot air, etc.

The intentional objects are also regarded as integral parts of the 'inner' episodes to which they belong, and hence the question of their existence need not be distinguished from the question of the independent existence of the 'inner' episodes themselves. In this way they are also regarded as 'qualifiers' of the episodes concerned. This may mean that the sensing of an *F* can be easily regarded as an *F*-sensation-state of the person (as the 'adjectival' models would have it) or as sensing *F*-ly (as the 'adverbial' models would put it). But in either case both Nyāya and Buddhist would say that the 'inner' episode is as real as anything else.

Since I have favoured the 'adverbial' theory as well as the 'state' theory over the 'sense-datum' theory, I wish to comment briefly on two supposedly serious objections brought against these theories by F. Jackson.[38] The first is called the many-property problem, and the second the complement problem. The idea behind the first is that when we are able to attribute a number of properties to a single sensory event, i.e. to the object of such an event, then there is a finer distinction which both these theories will miss. The second uses the same point to show that when it is legitimate to describe two objects of the same single sensory event by two contrary or contradictory predicates the above two theories would lead to the contradictory statement that a state is both *F* and non-*F*, or that one is sensing both *F*-ly and non-*F*-ly.

I think that both these objections are indecisive. Besides, if an intentional object is allowed for each sensory episode in the way that

[38] F. Jackson, pp. 88 f.

has been suggested above, then the two objections are wrongly conceived. The finer distinction adduced by the first objection is this. I may sense a red and round patch and a green and square patch at the same time in my visual field. At another time I may sense a red and square patch and a green and round patch. Translated into the language of the above two theories, the distinction in the objective counterpart of the two distinct cases of sensing would be lost. But to those who grant intentionality of sensing this does not come as any surprise. For of course we use material-object language to describe intentional objects, and hence these descriptions must be viewed with caution. Since terms appear there in what Quine has called opaque context, they do not occupy 'purely referential' positions, and hence quantification and inferences based upon referential uses of such terms do not apply there. The distinction will be visible if in each case we keep the intentional structure intact and use the expression describing the object in either case *rigidly ordered,* and lacking thereby the advantages of breakability, substitutivity, and so on (advantages that are allowed in expressions appearing in non-opaque contexts). Therefore the adjectival or adverbial modifier in one case would be 'red-and-round-patch-plus-green-and-square-patch' which is distinct from 'red-and-square-patch-plus-green-and-round-patch'. A Naiyāyika, armed with his concepts of 'delimitor', 'co-occurrence' and so on, would say that in the first case, the sensation is qualified by a complex objecthood, where the 'red' objecthood is conditioned by the 'round' objecthood and this is by 'co-occurrence' connected with the 'green' objecthood conditioned by the 'square' objecthood. The second sensation is distinct because it is delimited by another complex, where the 'red' objecthood is conditioned by the 'square' objecthood and this is governed by 'co-occurrence' connected with 'green' objecthood conditioned in its turn by the 'round' objecthood.

The above structural description of the expression for the first intentional object shows clearly that the first two elements ('red' and 'round') here are more intimately connected and so are the last two elements ('green' and 'square'), but between the two sub-complexes there is a less intimate connection. A similar structural description of the expression for the object in the second case of sensing (a red and square patch and a green and round patch) reveals its distinctness from the first. This will then explain why certain inferences would be possible while other inferences would not be allowed. But the main point is that the whole explanation is made, not by assuming the sense-

data as mental existents which are, or can be, red and square or green and round, but by allowing intentional objects in our sense (objects derivable from material objects, physical conditions, past experience, memory etc.).

I have said that memory sometimes presents the object intended by our sensory awareness. This needs to be explained further. Macbeth's dagger is a clear case of presentation by memory, according to Nyāya. The dagger as a material object has been experienced before by Macbeth. In that experience there was perfect coincidence between the material object and the 'intentional' object. The 'imprint' of the real dagger through the 'intentional' dagger is left behind in the memory-impression called *saṁskāra.* This lasts as long as the memory lasts, even after the expiry of the experience. Revival of the memory is another episode which perhaps unproblematically has this 'imprint' as its 'intentional' object. But the 'imprint' clearly derives from the once experienced real dagger. Now owing to fear, guilty conscience and other factors the imprint of the revived memory presents the 'intentional' object wrongly attributed to the space in front of Macbeth. Hence this hallucination can be taken to be a misperception of the empty space before him. The 'intentional' dagger endures as long as the 'inner' episode lasts, its existence being entirely dependent upon the episode itself. Hence according to Nyāya we need not posit in this sense a separate realm of 'intentional' objects where such objects are waiting ready to be grasped by some intentional (i.e. inner) episode. There is no other world than the actual world we live in.

In discussing the status of sense-data in Chapter 7, I tried to distinguish between sense-data and a set of particulars that are presumably created, according to Nyāya, through the co-operation of both physical factors and some mental episodes. I called them the set of *anomalous* particulars, which Nyāya would claim to be external and momentarily real. We should notice here the anomalous or rather the amorphous nature of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika category called *dravya* or 'substance' under which are included such a variety of entities as the physical elements (earth, air etc.), self (or souls), mind, space, and time. Besides, the selves (or souls) are said to have such well-known physical properties as dimension or size. A self is said to have the largest possible size; it is ubiquitous. Individual minds are mobile atomic entities and in this respect they are comparable to the physical earth-atoms etc. A self is said to be the substratum or 'location' (*ādhāra*) of such qualities or events as we call *mental,* awareness, anger,

or happiness. The atomic mind is said to be the 'instrument' for the production of such events in the location, the self. In fact, the atomic mind is described in the system as more or less a sort of go-between which links up the physical stimuli with the *non-physical* (in some sense of this non-committal adjective) events, such as anger, pain, pleasure, and perception. The ontological picture is therefore different from that of Cartesian dualism where bodies are what have extension and mind is what thinks.

The age-old dispute over the mind–body problem or the categorial difference between the mental and the physical has been rather counter-productive. This is a legacy of Cartesian dualism. The position of Nyāya and other Indian philosophers on this issue is rather ambiguous. And this may not be a sign of weakness but of strength.

Recently D. Davidson has very impressionistically outlined a position called 'anomalous monism'.[39] Since I claim that the Nyāya position is not strictly dualist, would it then be fair to say that it is a sort of anomalous monism (in Davidson's sense)? It is tempting to say 'yes' but I think that it would be utterly misleading. Davidson has argued that each mental event that is causally related to a physical event is itself a physical event. I am not sure whether this would be a correct representation of Davidson's view but the conclusion seems too sweeping. The Nyāya, to be sure, unabashedly physicalizes the mind but still it is not monism or the identity theory. Davidson says that 'it is possible to know that a mental event is identical with some physical event without knowing which one'. But Nyāya would go only so far as to say that it would be enough to treat the mental on a par with the physical while we attempt a casual explanation. In view of the anomalism of the mental we cannot but restrict ourselves to a *partial* explanation of causation of such regular mental events as perception, doubt, inferring, and being certain. In other words we may reconcile ourselves to the 'nomological' slack between the mental and the physical if only we remain satisfied with some very general causal factors of the mental.

12.5 *Ontology and Semantics*

Traditionally, discussion of metaphysical or ontological categories has roughly centred around universals and particulars. This is as much true in the West as in the Indian tradition. Universals are usually

[39] D. Davidson (1976b), p. 224.

understood as either properties or relations. One simple intuitive difference between properties and relations is this: While properties should belong to, or be exemplified by, one particular at a time, relations are exemplified by at least two particulars called relata. If we consider only dyadic relations, as we usually do in the Indian context, then we can say that we need only two particulars to exemplify a relation (ignoring here the case for identity as a relation), while a property can be exemplified by one particular. For the time being I will concentrate upon relations, for I have already discussed the notion of so-called properties in the first part of this chapter.

There are, we may note, usually two extreme views regarding the ontological status of relation. One is presented by the Buddhist and explicitly advocated by Dharmakīrti in his short treatise.[40] It may be stated as follows: If a universe consists of unique and independent (self-sufficient) atomic simples, no ontology of relation is necessary.

To summarize roughly Dharmakīrti's argument; a real relation may imply either dependence of one item upon another or a sort of mutual dependence (*parāpekṣā*). If an entity is already existent (has obtained its being) it cannot depend upon anything else. And if it is yet to come into existence, it can have no need to depend upon anything, for how can an absent (a non-existent) entity really depend on anything? Mutual dependence also cannot apply to two entities that are already existent, self-sustained, and distinct. And non-existent entities would be only like a pair of rabbit's horns. A real relation may also mean, according to some Buddhists, mingling, actual 'touching' of atoms that generate coloured shapes (*rūpaśleṣa*). But as we have already seen (Chapter 11.2), partless atoms cannot really 'touch' each other. And if the atoms cannot touch, they cannot create gross visible forms. Therefore, if the world is a world of simple, atomic, self-sustained particulars, there can be no place for any real relation or connector. All so-called connectors would only be our subjective attribution.

Dharmakīrti further argues that if we seriously entertain the notion of a real connector we arrive at the following paradox: 'if two (entities) are related by virtue of there being a connection/relation between them, then what relates that relation to either of the two relata? It leads to infinite regress. Therefore, there is no *real* relation that we may come to know between the (first) two.' What Dharmakīrti says here is better known in the West as the paradox of relation, and in modern

[40] See Dharmakīrti's *Sambandhaparīkṣā*, especially verses 1–5.

times it is usually referred to as Bradley's paradox of relation. F. H. Bradley calls the problem 'insoluble': 'The links are united by a link, and this bond of union is a link which has two ends; and these require each a fresh link to connect them with the old. The problem is to find how the relation can stand to its qualities, and this problem is insoluble.'[41]

Russell commented several times on this paradox. At one place he wrote, 'the endless regress, though undeniable, is logically quite harmless'.[42] It is not clear, however, what Russell meant by 'logically quite harmless'. Udayana, the Naiyāyika, mentioned (in a quite different connection) several specimens of what he thought to be an admissible (harmless) infinite regress: 'This endless regress is logically unproblematic, as in the case of the-seed-and-the-sprout', but it is not certain whether this is what Russell had in mind.

In another place, Russell argued that the relation-paradox arises from a misconception: 'A great deal of confusion about relations which has prevailed in practically all philosophies comes from the fact that relations are indicated, not by relations, but by words which are as substantial as other words.[43] Here Russell goes right to the heart of the trouble. For certainly part of the problem is tied to the alleged substantiality of relation-words. Instead of paying full attention to the logico-linguistic aspect of the problem, I wish to concentrate more on the ontological issues, in order to keep it in line with Dharmakīrti's formulation. It may however be mentioned that Bhartṛhari once said that there are really no 'expressive' words in language for relation in general, and for the word–object relation in particular. One reason seems to be that if the relation is given by the 'expressive' word, it becomes as *substantial* (to use Russell's phrase) as a term, and then we may need a further relation. Bhartṛhari's main point has been referred to as 'Bhartṛhari's Paradox' by H. Herzberger and R. Herzberger in their very illuminating paper.[44]

Returning to Dharmakīrti, we may note the contrast between his metaphysical commitment to a pluralistic world populated with particulars or *svalakṣaṇas* and Bradley's commitment to a monistic metaphysic. Some philosophers thought that if the reality of relation is proven, monism can be successfully refuted. But here in Dharmakīrti we have a pluralist who argues that if relation is real i.e. mingles *really*

[41] F. H. Bradley (1930), pp. 16–17.
[42] B. Russell (1903) p. 100.
[43] B. Russell (1927), p. 275.
[44] See H. and R. Herzberger, pp. 2–15.

the two together into one then strict pluralism will be refuted, in the end it only opens the door to monism!

The other extreme view about relation may be stated as follows. The world of exclusive particulars has to be supplanted by a domain of universals. Therefore in traditional metaphysics entities are more often than not classified into particulars and universals. This leads to an ontology of relations, which are also universals, and this is only the beginning of the problems for this type of metaphysics. I cannot attribute this view to any particular school or philosopher. But traditionally one of the senses of realism has been associated with the view that admits the reality of relation. In practice we have different modified and compromised versions of this rather extreme view about relation and universal in general. The Nyāya position is one such compromised version which I shall now outline.

First, I must resolve one terminological confusion, of which I myself along with most modern writers on Indian philosophy have been guilty. This concerns the translation of the Nyāya *sambandha* as 'relation'. Besides *samavāya,* 'inherence', there is probably no genuine 'relation' in Nyāya. A relation is automatically a universal, as the term is understood in the Western tradition. Inherence is also a relation in this sense.[45] But as regards other items called *sambandha* a better term would be 'connector' which I shall use in this section. Inherence is also called a 'connector' (*sambandha*) in Nyāya, and this only complicates the matter.

For the sake of convenience, we may sometimes use the 'portmanteau' phrases 'monadic universal' and 'dyadic universal' to refer to property-universals such as cowhood and badness, and relation-universals like inherence, killing, and residence in. (In the Indian context we speak only of dyadic relations.) Sometimes this distinction is marked by calling the first 'absolute adjectives' and the second 'relative adjectives'. Nyāya would say that if there is a need for accepting monadic universals, the need for accepting a relation or a connector will arise automatically. For we need something to connect the monadic universals to the particulars. The traditional distinction between universals and particulars is that particulars are such that we can

[45] The Prābhākara view of *samavāya* is rather significant. It is not *one,* and not *eternal.* See Śālikanātha, pp. 92–3. Hence it is like any other *sambandha* 'connector' in Nyāya. When a cow dies, this connector connecting the universal cow-hood with that particular cow is destroyed, and hence (it is argued by Śālikanātha) we cannot see cow-hood in that particular spatio-temporal location.

attribute universals to them, but cannot attribute *them* to anything, and universals are, to use the Strawsonian style, such that we can do both, i.e. attribute (further) universals to them and attribute them to others.[46]

Modern logicians argue that universals give rise to ontological issues when they are introduced in our discourse in the first way, i.e. when something is said *about* them. For, to use Quine's language, they become in that case values of bound variables in quantificational language. Or, as Dummett has put it, to say something about them, we have to refer to them by abstract expressions (or some such device) as we do with respect to particulars, and thus we 'particularize' them; to put it more strongly, we *reify* universals. At the next stage, Dummett continues, we can think of every atomic sentence, e.g. 'Socrates runs' as a combination or 'cohesion' of two things, viz. Socrates and running, and the necessity eventually arises to search for 'the cohesive element'.[47] Russell's statement in this connection, namely that the confusion about relation prevails because relations are indicated by words which are as substantial as other words, matches with Bhartṛhari's intuition that no substantial expression in language can express (speak of, or denote) relation, for if it does, then relation is turned into a term. Bhartṛhari's point, to use a Wittgensteinian expression, is that we can *show* relations in language but not *say* (express) it.

Bhartṛhari however would avoid the Dharmakīrti–Bradley paradox in his own ingenious way. For, he would say, if we 'particularize' relation by using a substantival expression to refer to it, it is tinged with what he calls a 'metaphorical existence', and hence the search for a further cohesive element may be justified in the given context. But this is both logically and ontologically harmless or tolerable. For the world populated by the metaphorically existent (cf. *upacāra-sattā*) entities is not the real world. Population in that world does not create problems in Bhartṛhari's holistic real world. Metaphorically existent entities are devised for our convenience, for example, in semantic, epistemic or grammatical analysis. Outside the context of such purposes, these entities should be considered as dissolved in our oceanic and holistic world. In this way the proposal seems to be that we can get the best of both worlds.

If universals are introduced only in the second way, i.e. to 'attribute

[46] P. F. Strawson (1959), Ch. V. [47] M. Dummett (1981), pp. 175–6.

them to others', then a modern logician feels that we are not necessarily committed to admit them ontologically. Even if we are committed to admit monadic universals, we need not admit any relation to connect them with particulars. Strawson has suggested that by speaking only of a non-relational tie which is supposed to generate the subject-predicate proposition we can argue ourselves out of Bradley's puzzle about relation.[48]

Dummett has however remarked that we cannot argue ourselves out of Bradley's puzzle completely unless we develop something like a Fregean concept of a concept which is unsaturated and incomplete and which therefore needs completion by a Fregean object or objects (in the case of a relational concept). In the Fregean system, an object falls under a concept, and the two need no extra 'glue' to be fitted together. For 'they fit together naturally, in a way we can think of as analogous to that in which a predicate and a proper name, or a relational expression and two proper names, fit together to form a sentence'. In this way, Dummett thinks, Bradley's puzzle is rendered spurious.[49]

The modern logical device with which we render Bradley's puzzle spurious leaves the ontological problem of objective universals unaffected. It is true that in the interest of logical theories we need a domain of individuals (values of variables of quantification) which must be particulars with clear-cut identity conditions. Such particulars may even be sets and ordered pairs with clear-cut identity conditions, for then the language becomes more powerful for many scientific purposes. But the question is whether the ontological domain, in the sense given to it in descriptive metaphysics, is entirely exhausted by a set of unique particulars. For if it could be so, that domain would be the nominalist's paradise. But no nominalist, not even the Buddhist, has been able to dispense completely with our talk of universals. The moment we think that ontology asks 'What sorts of *things* are there?' we introduce the notion of universals. The *apoha* theory of the Buddhist, in the final analysis, appears to be a compromise between the idea of perceived particulars and the conceived non-particulars. As I have already noted, if we need some monadic universals we may need also some dyadic universals. Could we simply accept some dyadic universals, perhaps one such universal, and dispense with all monadic universals? This is also a possibility, as is certainly envisaged by the nominalist's intuition which blends a kind of Humean or Dharmakīrtian

[48] P. F. Strawson (1959), p. 169.

[49] M. Dummett (1981), p. 175.

'resemblance' theory with the ontology of particulars. One dyadic universal that would be preferred is resemblance (likeness or similarity), and this would be an objective universal. But the difficulties of the resemblance theory are also well known.

Now let me sketch the Nyāya ontological perspective in this context. The Nyāya ontological domain is mainly populated with particulars, things, property-particulars, and action-particulars. It is also populated with some monadic universals, mainly natural kinds and metaphysical kinds. Therefore, not every general term generates an objective universal in this system (see 12.4 above). We need not worry about the property-essences of new artefacts, synthetic goods etc. for the general policy in the traditional school has been to analyse material objects into fundamental elements such as earth, water, air etc., and then talk about the universal essences of each element. We can modernize this policy to speak of universal properties only of the fundamental elements as well as some natural elements. But apart from the above, the ontological domain of Nyāya contains one dyadic universal, a relation called inherence, which, strangely enough, has a protean character in that it connects not only universals to particulars but also particulars (particular instances of properties) to particulars (i.e. their particular substrata). The argument that is offered for this protean character of the single relation is ontological economy (*lāghava*). This also shows that Nyāya is sensitive to the pitfalls of 'Plato's beard' and is unconsciously acquainted with Ockham's razor.

I propose to make a distinction between two domains in the form of two concentric circles, one outer and the other inner, one representing the domain of semantico-epistemic entities, the other that of ontological entities. The first should contain any entity posited for the analysis of knowledge, judgements or sentences to facilitate structural descriptions of them for our understanding. Some of these entities would coincide, after proper analysis etc., with the ontologically real entities, and in that case, they would easily find their place in the inner circle, the ontological domain. The subjectively constructed and hence dispensable entities, whose usefulness in analysis is beyond dispute, would however be in the outer domain, performing somewhat the same function as the nominally existent entities of the Buddhist or the metaphorically existent entities of Bhartṛhari. The rationale for such a proposal, within the Nyāya tradition, is to be found in Udayana's philosophically significant distinction between *jāti*, 'objective (monadic) universal', and *upādhi*, 'nominal universal', as well as in the frequent

Navya-Nyāya suggestion which is made concerning many abstract relational expressions such as qualifier-hood (*prakāratā*) qualificand-hood (*viśeṣyatā*) delimitor-ship (*avacchedakatā*) and substratum-hood (*ādhāratā*). The suggestion is that they should be regarded only as *svarūpa-sambandha-viśeṣa,* 'relation-particulars uniquely contrived for the occasion' ('particularized' connectors) but not ontologically distinguishable from the terms they connect. These abstract relational expressions are in frequent use by the Navya-Naiyāyikas in their analytic description of knowledge-structures, statements, sentence-structures, etc.[50]

Udayana's classification of universals and abstract properties into 'real' and 'nominal' is intriguing much in the same way as Uddyotakara's argument that some general terms like 'cook', 'reader', and 'swimmer' do not *generate* or deliver real universals. Uddyotakara (under 2.2.65) argued that only a few general terms need to be considered when we talk about real universals, for they must pass through the following test: (i) general terms used to account for the common awareness that arises with regard to a number of different objects (*bhinneṣu anugata-pratyaya*) should be based upon a ground (*nimitta*) to make such application of terms possible, and (ii) that ground should be a *simple* (non-compound) and unitary property or entity which cannot be analysed or explained away otherwise. It is contended here that in this way we may reach the basic categories of natural kinds, such as cowhood, horsehood, goldness, and earthness, and of metaphysical kinds, such as substancehood, actionhood, and existenthood. Many 'bogus' universals may pass only the first part of the test, not the second, and hence need not be taken to be ontologically real.

The nominal or 'bogus' universals and abstract properties are no doubt talked about but only as a heuristic device for assigning some semantic interpretation to sentences and for analysing the instances of knowledge that are verbalized or expressed therein. It is a matter of common experience that we can have a similar or non-distinct awareness (*pratyaya*) about objects that are distinct and ostensibly different, and that in our linguistic usage common or general terms like 'cow', 'three-legged', or 'snub-nosed' are commonly used in recognition of this fact. (A view influenced by modern logical tradition would say that these general terms or so-called 'predicates' are *true of* a number of different individuals.) But should they, on this account,

[50] B. K. Matilal (1968), pp. 40–51.

spell out for us some real universals or abstract properties? No, says, Uddyotakara. For, logically, only a basis or a ground (*nimitta*) is required to account for the use of such general terms. This 'basis' or 'ground' may be very germane or simply an accidental appendage (*upalakṣaṇa*) to the object meant (as, for example, when we call a man 'barefooted'). In fact, any common feature of these different objects may be used as a basis for this purpose. There need not be an underlying real universal in each case.

Several traditional objections to the doctrine of universals can be met in this way. For example, if we say, 'horsehood is a universal and cowhood is a universal, and so on' then we need a universal of universals, universalhood. Uddyotakara says that such universalhood is a *bogus* universal, for the 'basis' for the use of the expression '(real) universal' with regard to such entities as cowhood and horsehood is nothing but the feature of their being one-in-many (being one, that is, they reside in many by inherence, *anekārtha-samavāyitva*). Similarly, such terms as 'barefooted', 'club-bearer', 'cook', and 'reader' do not apply to different objects in virtue of the presence of some real universals in the objects to which they apply. Rather, the 'basis' for application in each of such cases is ostensibly given, namely features such as bare feet, a club in the hand, particular acts of cooking, reading etc. Notice that in each case, the presence of some particular or other is enough to warrant our use of such general terms. In this way we can easily dispose of the luxuries of such exotic universals as barefootedness, club-bearer-hood, cookhood, and readership. The same point can be made by my previous example of 'five persons with five red hats'.

With the above answer, we can meet the charge that, once universals are admitted then each time a factory produces a new egg-beater or an electric toaster, a new universal or a form has to be introduced, or dragged from the Platonic heaven.[51] The Nyāya doctrine of *upādhi* would hold that such questions simply do not arise. A plausible view is that we simply manipulate the existing materials (which in the ultimate analysis would belong to natural kinds, earthness etc.) for our own convenience, and the virtue of such convenience extends even to our communicating among ourselves with the help of a general term. This no doubt has the consequence that some well-entrenched real universals admitted by Nyāya, such as pot-ness or cloth-ness, are to be

[51] J. L. Mackie, p. 127.

given up in favour of the materials of natural kind alone. But this modification would not be fatal to the doctrine of universals as a whole. For not much would be affected by the suggested excision in the Nyāya system.

From the point of view of logic, the matter can be put as follows: to mimick very roughly the argument given by Strawson in the final chapter of his *Individuals* we may say that if *F* is true of several individuals, *a, b,* and *c* such that *Fa, Fb,* and *Fc* are true (when *a, b,* and *c* are logical subjects and *F* is a predicate of any kind) this may imply not only the existence of *a, b,* and *c* but also that of *F*-ness. For, admittedly, having said that Socrates is wise I cannot consistently go on to say that there is no such thing as wisdom. But of course the oddity of '*F*-ness exists', Strawson explains, is dissolved by taking it to mean either that there are *F*'s (or something *F*'s) or that *F* has a meaning. Only a hard-headed Platonist could claim that whenever *F* can be truly applied to an existent thing or things, *F*-ness exists.[52] Nyāya says simply that while it is a *necessary* condition for *F*-ness to exist it is never a *sufficient* condition. For *F*-ness to exist, i.e. to be ontologically real and therefore to be included in the inner circle of the Nyāya scheme, it must also be a simple property (unanalysable and incapable of being explained away otherwise) and a 'natural kind' or a 'metaphysical kind' property. Moreover, if we are committed to a world populated with particulars not just of one kind but several (*dravya, guṇa* and *karma*, for example), we may be committed to the admission of real universals of such a metaphysical kind as substancehood, qualityhood, and action-hood (as Nyāya seems to believe).

The pertinent question is whether the abstract entities referred to by expressions such as '*F*-ness' – expressions which are in frequent use in language that gives semantic interpretations, or in meaning-analysis of ordinary sentences such as '*a* is *F* – should be accorded a basic, independent existence of their own or whether we should explain them away, wherever we can, in terms of observable features of concrete things and human behaviour. Except for certain basic abstract properties belonging to some natural and metaphysical kinds, Nyāya accepts the second alternative here. In this respect Nyāya seems to accept what Strawson has called the 'reductionist pressure' on non-particulars.

There is another way in which Nyāya gives way to the nominalist

[52] P. F. Strawson (1959), pp. 242–3.

pressure. A real universal must partake of the nature of 'one-in-many'. If an abstract property belongs to only one individual (i.e. *F* is true of only one item *a*), it is also accorded the status of a *nominal* or bogus property, although it may be a very basic, simple and not further analysable property. Therefore it is said that the skyhood in the sky is not a real property but an *upādhi*, a nominal attribute of a real individual, the sky. According to the scheme I have presented here, the nominal property is in the outer circle, and in the inner circle we place the real property, on which the former is logically dependent. This gives the third necessary condition for disqualifying a property from being regarded as a real entity (*vyakter abhedaḥ*, Udayana).[53] The abstraction process generates what is called an *akhaṇḍa upādhi*, a further unanalysable, basic, but bogus property. Just as in the case of other bogus universals, '*F*-ness exists' means simply 'there are *F*'s', here it means likewise that there is only one sky. However, the logical and epistemological role played by a real and basic universal is similar to that played by such an unreal (bogus) but basic property. In our awareness they can both be grasped as such (*svarūpato bhānam;* see Chapter 10.8). Since they are simple, they can be presented without further qualification (cf. *niṣprakāraka*). Hence in perceptual awareness, when I see a cow as a cow, I see it as qualified by cowness (and likewise if I am aware of the sky as the sky, I am aware of it as qualified by skyhood), but I need not be aware of cowness (or skyhood) as qualified by another property. One may say that here we reach in Nyāya the 'epistemic firsts' comparable to the pure sensations of the epistemologists (the 'uncoloured' data).

This leads to another peculiarity of the Nyāya view. The real universals and basic properties are directly grasped by our awareness as ultimates. Some of them, such as cowhood and horsehood, are claimed by Nyāya to be directly perceptible. When we see a cow, sometimes we also see cowhood along with it, although we may not at the same time see one *as* a cow and the other as cowness. Both entities appear in awareness 'uncoloured'. This is what Gaṅgeśa has called the pure non-constructive, non-judgemental, or non-qualificative perception. This is only a precondition for seeing a cow as a cow (Chapter 10.8).

We may reject the 'precondition' thesis. But awareness of cow-ness *as such* (pure, 'uncoloured' cowness) is nevertheless an essential part of

[53] Udayana, *Kiraṇāvalī*, p. 23.

our awareness of a cow as a cow. This non-qualificative awareness is also in a sense inexpressible in language. (This seems to be a reflex of the Buddhist thesis of the inexpressibility of the pure object of sense-perception.) For in the linguistic expression or verbalization of the awareness of the cow as a cow, or the sky as the sky, we say only, 'This is a cow', or 'This is the sky', we do not say, 'This has cowness', or 'This has skyhood', for these would be expressions of very different cognitive episodes. In Wittgensteinian terms, we may say that the awareness 'This is a cow' *shows* cowness, but does not *say* it.

Nyāya uses a further condition for this 'presentation-as-such' (presentation of 'uncoloured' objects in perception or awareness) doctrine of the ultimates, such as real universals and basic abstract properties. They remain *un-said* or unexpressed in the verbal representation of the awareness. If they are expressed, or have verbal representation, then they also need another 'qualifier' or a mode of presentation.

It is said that in the awareness 'This has cowness', cowness is further qualified by cowness-ness. In other words, we are aware here of cowness as cowness. But this only leads to the further artificial creation of bogus properties, which can only serve as a heuristic device.

The above has a parallel, if only partially, in Frege's doctrine of sense. If we use an expression, then it must have a *sense* ('a mode of presentation') which we can grasp, though we cannot say it in words. If another expression is used, presumably to *say* it, then we must look for another sense which we must grasp in order to pick out its reference. Similarly in the verbal representation of our awareness, the ultimates (*jāti* and *akhaṇḍa upādhi*) are not represented (not 'said'), although they are grasped in the awareness itself, but when they are verbally represented we need a further mode of presenting them (which mode, however, would remain unrepresented again). This of course does not mean that Frege's senses are entities like these ultimates. Our comment only indicates a parallel with a particular feature of the *sense* doctrine, and nothing more needs to be said here.

Consider the following sentences (all of which can be represented as '*Fa*'):

(1) This is gold.
(2) This is a cow.
(3) This is blue.
(4) This is four-legged.

Here, the first two are regarded by Nyāya as more basic combinations than the last two. Since goldness and cowness are two real universals, the first two are further unpackable as: *aRb* where '*b*' stands for goldness in (1) and cowness in (2). But contrary to our expectation, the expression 'blue' in (3) stands for a particular instance of blue, which instance, however, is presented in awareness *as* blue (i.e. as qualified by blue-universal or blueness). Similarly, 'four-legged' in (4) presents the ostentated object as having four particular legs, and those legs are presented as legs (i.e. qualified leghood). Hence (3) and (4) would unpack as not simply *aRb* but also *aR(cRb)*. (Here *R* represents the general 'connector' predicate, 'is qualified by'.) It is to be noted here that some bogus universals or properties are to be admitted only provisionally, so that the small letters such as *b* in *aRb* may stand for them. But they are only provisionally admitted because in theory at least, they are unpackable until we reach some ultimates, i.e. some combination of ultimates and particulars.

Two points should be noted in this connection. First, this unpacking or analysis or reparsing is envisaged as a theoretical possibility. It is not absolutely clear how it should be done in each case. Second, this method of unpacking already presupposes that we have a very clear idea of what are the ultimates and what the ultimate particulars are like. In other words, an ontological scheme like that of Nyāya is first to be accepted.

In discussing relation-universals we have to say that Nyāya admits only a single real relation, 'inherence' *samavāya*. Accepting a term used by Karl Potter[54] we may introduce a distinction between a relation and a connector. A connector is a particular while a relation is a universal. A connector simply connects two particular entities. It can be a real particular, a mind-independent entity, such as *saṁyoga* or physical conjunction of two material bodies. (This is, at least, how Nyāya would like to explain what we call physical contact, and hence it is placed in the inner domain of ontological entities.) A connector can also be a *bogus* entity, a representation of some subjective, mind-dependent connection between entities. The so-called *svarūpa-sambandhas* in Nyāya would belong to this group, and hence, according to the scheme that we have presented here, they would be conveniently pushed into the outer domain, for they are admitted only as heuristic devices.

A real connector, like a physical conjunction, can even be a

[54] This is suggested to me by K. H. Potter's paper 'An Ontology of Concrete Connector'.

perceptible particular. Thus it is argued that we can see the conjunction (*saṁyoga*) when we see, for example, the two palms connected. This connector in Nyāya is almost as concrete as a coat of glue. Nyāya stops short of calling it a substance, i.e. a material substance like glue, but calls it a *guṇa* i.e. a property-particular.

In developing the doctrine of subjective or *bogus* connectors, in the manner of bogus and nominal universals, Nyāya concedes the familiar argument found in a very strong and well-entrenched tradition in philosophy. This view maintains that all relations are subjective, and that the attempt to establish objective validation for such subjective experience is fundamentally flawed. The only rationale for introducing relations in our discussion is the purported meaning-analysis we attempt to give of sentences that verbally represent some piece of knowledge or other, or the structural description we give of the complete contents of these pieces of knowledge themselves.

Nyāya finds the epistemic ultimates in real universals and basic properties.[55] All other entities, when they are cognized, are cognized only in respect of, i.e. qualified by, some property or other, and this may need further unpacking. But when something is grasped in cognition as qualified by a real universal such as cowness, no further unpacking of cowness is called for. To wit: the descriptive phrase 'the man who ate black chocolate' can be unpacked in terms of the man as a man, agency as a connector, eating as an instance of action, black as a colour, objecthood (*karmatva*) as a connector, chocolate as a piece of chocolate, and inherence as a relation. In this, there are four real particulars, the man, the particular action of eating, the particular instance of black colour, and the particular piece of chocolate, four corresponding universals (real or nominal), two nominal connectors, and a real relation. The moral seems to be this. The non-realist may judge things only in their relationship. But the realist who judges things as objects is inevitably led into accepting some relation as real or objective.

[55] It should be noted that the Nyāya conception of *real* universal is extensional. For Udayana clearly says that the 'sameness' (*tulyatva*) of individual members is a criterion for identifying the corresponding universals. In other words, two universals would be considered as one if, and only if, they are locatable in the same individuals. See *Kiraṇāvalī*, p. 23. Another comment of Udayana in the same place lends support to my suggested comparison of the Nyāya real universals with natural kinds: '*Kāraṇatvaṃ hi sāmānyena niyamyate, kāryatvaṃ ca / tac ca svābhāvikam abādhanāt, sādhanāc caupādhikam iti viśeṣaḥ.*' ('Causality is regulated by universals, and so is effect-hood. It is a *natural* universal if there is no obstruction [in establishing it], it is a conditional [nominal] universal when we have to establish it through effort (construction?).' (Ibid., p. 23).

I shall conclude by giving a very general defence for the introduction of the outer domain in the ontological scheme. A similar device has been resorted to by many other philosophers in some way or other, as I have already noted. The convenient expressions 'existence' and 'subsistence' were used by some philosophers not very long ago. The point is this. Roughly the real existents in the inner domain do not by themselves need any element in the outer domain. Their existence is independent of those in the outer circle. But if we, human beings, with our natural imperfections and frailties, want to talk about these existents, understand them, and communicate our understanding to our fellow-creatures, i.e. transmit the knowledge that we seem to acquire to others who are in common pursuit of the same ends as ourselves, then we *generate* thereby the outer domain. If we simply had *intuitive* understanding of everything, or mystical insight into everything that is real in the manner of the Buddha, and if, further, we remained silent like true or ideal mystics (Cratylus only wiggled his fingers), then there would be no need for introducing the other domain. The Buddha would probably have said that, since our imperfections begat all this proliferation of entities, when perfection of understanding or wisdom (*prajñā-pāramitā*) is reached, the outer domain will naturally vanish. But we may add that when the outer domain vanishes in this way, we imperfect humans will no longer be humans! To change the metaphor, the inner domain that the Nyāya envisages is posited as the god's-eye view of the universe much in the same way as science regards objectivity as the god's-eye view of realities. But still, it may be argued, the Nyāya ontology is only a posit. A better scientific philosophy may posit a better picture of the universe. However, if we agree that there cannot be any absolute conception of the universe, but only many conceptions of the presumably absolute universe, some more elegant, more comprehensive and more coherent than others, then we have to remain satisfied with a sort of ontological relativity. In this context I believe the Nyāya–Buddhist philosophical dialogue provides a fairly coherent and comprehensive picture.

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